

The Gramophone

Edited by **COMPTON MACKENZIE**

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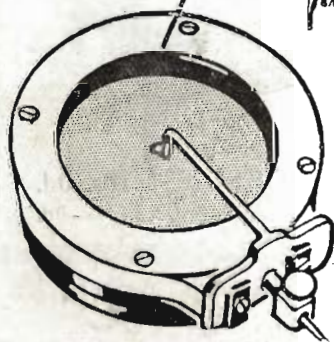
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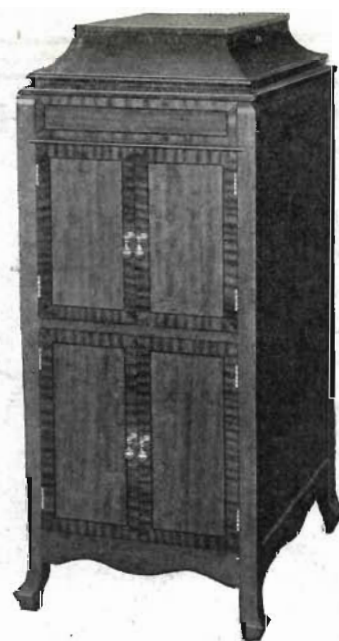
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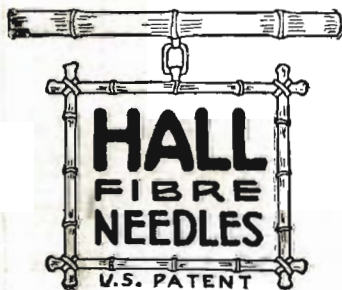
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REVIEW OF THE LAST QUARTER OF 1924 AND JANUARY, 1925

By THE EDITOR

SIX symphonies, two concertos, four quartets, three sonatas! I will not say "pity the poor quarterly reviewer," because he is to be envied rather than pitied; but, readers and recorders, please forgive what every quarter becomes more and more an inadequate survey. Before we lose ourselves in the consideration of the above list I want to call my readers' attention to one or two outstanding records that may escape their notice if left to the end. First and foremost I want nobody to miss the two records of the Sistine-Vatican Choir just issued by the Parlophone Company. These are so easily the best choral records produced up till now that, though the price (7s. 6d.) may shock Parlophone patrons for a moment, I assure them that they really are worth it. On my Balmain instrument the effect is miraculous, but it is amazing on all my instruments. The table Orchorsol handled them best after the Balmain, and if only fibre would stand up to them, the performance on the Orchorsol would be exquisite; but in these records Mr. Wild's doped fibre seems to have met its Waterloo, unless the sudden rise of the glass after a fortnight of

tempest may have a share in the defeat. These records made, I presume, in Italy, open a new era in choral recording. As for the music and the singing, it would be impertinent to praise either. Do, all of you who care for sixteenth century church music, hurry up and buy these records, and so encourage the Parlophone Company to give us the whole of the greatest Palestrina Mass. The next records I want you not to pass over are the three Gerhardt's, issued by the Vocalion Company. I know that many of our readers have been disappointed by the earlier Gerhardts, but I am confident that all these will delight them. One is a 12in. with Schubert's *Andie Musik* and Brahms' *Sapphische Ode* for 5s. 6d. The other two are 10in. at 4s. One has Schubert's *Der Musensohn* and Strauss' *Morgen*, the other Brahms' *Vergebliches Stündchen* and Strauss' *Cäcilie*. There is no comparison with the earlier records. These really are Gerhardt, and the recording of the piano is the best I've heard. Then there is a new McCormack with *obligato* by Kreisler of two lovely Irish songs. Dr. Larchet, the composer of *Padraic the Fiddler*, is the enthusiastic

president of the Dublin Gramophone Society, and we all owe him our gratitude for this delicious record. Brunswick issues a lovely record of Maria Ivogün singing a vocal edition of Kreisler's *Liebesfreud* and a song of Johann Strauss on the other side. Frieda Hempel gives what I think is one of her best records with *Wings of Song* on one side and *Hark, hark, the lark* on the other. Anybody who does not yet possess *Eri tu che macchiavi* and invests in the new Battistini record will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has one of the two best. In fact, I am inclined to think that it is really better than the Stracciari rendering. Finally, those who appreciate great dramatic singing should pay attention to the Formichi records issued by Columbia, and particularly to the *Te Deum* from *La Tosca*, which is superb and very much better than the Battistini record of this scene, which, however, was a very early recording, I fancy. On the other side of the *Te Deum* is the *Credo* from *Otello* splendidly sung. The above vocal records stand out particularly in my memory as what I have enjoyed most this quarter.

I should like to think that the issue of Mozart's three greatest symphonies by three different recording companies was a sign of grace; but, alas, from what I hear it is only a happy accident, and the cut-throat policy for great orchestral works is only scotched and not killed. In connection with this topic I have heard that Kreisler is going to record the Mozart *Concerto in A*. Such a rumour must thrill the whole gramophone world; but I am sure that I shall be voicing the feeling of every single one of our readers when I beg that the Mozart *Concerto*, of which we have a delightful rendering by Mr. Catterall (and Mr. Catterall's playing has never seemed to me so good on the gramophone) issued by the Columbia Company in December, shall not be the one chosen. He who is to conduct this concerto and he who writes these lines frequent the same hat shop, and there just before Christmas they met. Although the conductor only asked the writer's advice about the hat he was trying on, that advice was supplemented by a passionate appeal to avoid the Mozart *Concerto in A*. Of course this rumour may be as false as most, and in that case I humbly beg pardon for giving a mere bogey so much prominence. But if Kreisler is going to give us a concerto (and we are all praying for this happy event), do let me, on behalf of our thousands of readers all over the world, entreat him not to give us a duplicate.

Meanwhile, to return to the Columbia version issued in four double-sided records and album, what a delicious work it is! "When proud-pied April dress'd in all his trim, hath put a spirit of youth in everything." These lines of Shakespeare express all that I should like to say about Mozart. Of the dozens and dozens of albums on my shelves, I doubt if there is one so satisfactorily filled as that which

begins with the three Columbia records in *E flat major*, continued with four Vocalion records of the *G minor*, and now this month has the four H.M.V. records of the *C major*. The Vocalion people filled up their vacant side with a *Rigaudon* of Rameau. It was a happy choice, but I think H.M.V. made a happier choice by filling up their vacant side of the *Jupiter* with the *Impresario Overture* of Mozart himself. This album had the twelfth envelope vacant, and I decided to mark my appreciation of what the Parlophone Company has done for us in the recording of complete overtures by allotting to the vacant place their version of the *Don Giovanni Overture*. Records and album, if you buy one of the splendid new Astra albums, will cost £3 17s. 6d. I am inclined to challenge any reader to produce another twelve records which will give more pleasure at the same price. I am not going to indulge in odious comparisons about the merits of the reproductions, because I am too happy in the possession of them. At the same time, I cannot help reflecting that, if Columbia and H.M.V. records cost the same as Vocalion records, that odd 17s. would be knocked off. But then you couldn't have the Symphony Orchestra and a world-famous conductor. Perhaps not. But, Columbia, let us have a few complete works in dark blue, and, H.M.V., why not a plum-coloured masterpiece? I am sorry always to appear as the Oliver Twist of the gramophone world, but I get letter after letter from people who simply cannot afford to spend 6s. 6d. and 7s. 6d. on each record, but who are longing for complete symphonies. Why doesn't some company try the experiment of using a really small orchestra and giving us a symphony at a really popular price—2s. 6d. a disc, for instance? No doubt there would be a loss, but it would not be a very heavy one.

The Vocalion Company has followed up the Mozart *G minor* at 4s. 6d. a record with Haydn's so-called *Oxford Symphony*, which I have not yet had the pleasure of hearing, while Parlophone has given us Beethoven's *Seventh* and Tchaikovsky's *Sixth* at the same price. I don't think that the last version of the *Pathétique* is as good as the H.M.V. version. In fact, I know it is not; but it is very good, and it is much better than the mutilated Columbia version, not merely because it is more complete, but because it is better recorded. I have not had time to play over the Parlophone version of the Beethoven *Seventh* more than twice, but I think it is definitely better than the Columbia version, which has not worn well for my ear. Since correspondents have taken to collating my earlier opinions I have to be rather careful what I say, and I find to my relief on looking up my review of the third quarter of 1923 that I was not enthusiastic about the Columbia version when it first appeared, although at that date one hesitated to criticise any complete work too sharply.

This quarter Columbia has given us Brahms' *First Symphony in C minor*, which is their most successful orchestral effort after the Franck symphony. By the way, I must congratulate the company on the excellent innovation of printing in their albums a complete analysis of each record on its envelope. This was started with the Mozart *Concerto*. But the real credit for this innovation must be given to the Velvet Face Company, who used it in their *Gerontius* album. One or two correspondents have written to me asking how they are ever to enjoy Brahms' *Symphony in D*. The only reply I can make is "incessant playing." But I must warn any readers who regretted buying the *D major* that the *C minor* will be from their point of view even more of a proposition. Yet if they will only have faith and persevere, they will derive from Brahms a pleasure that no other composer except Beethoven can give.

The re-recording of the *Unfinished Symphony* by H.M.V. is welcome, but this symphony which is the gateway for most people to major orchestral works, would have been the very one to choose to record well and issue at a popular price. Schubert's orchestration has always made him rather difficult for the recorders, and H.M.V. deserves the very greatest credit for a conspicuous success, and one that must have taken an immense amount of care to secure. Last month one of our reviewers criticised a certain carelessness in the recording of the Schumann *Concerto*. I think I shall be right in saying that for the majority of our readers this criticism will seem too kind, for really the records are very expensive, and by no means first class. I do not like Cortot's interpretation of Schumann, and the tendency of various pianists to accentuate their importance by changing the traditional point of view seems to me childish. If Cortot disapproves of what he might call Schumann's sentimentalism, why does he not leave him alone? Paderewski never substituted himself for the composer, and though, unfortunately, we have no good records of him on the gramophone, even the bad ones we have proclaim him by far the greatest pianist of our time. What a sad thing that Rubinstein was too early for the gramophone! This attempt to find an entirely new way of interpreting composers like Chopin and Schumann reminds me of the competition among actors to find new ways of playing *Hamlet*, which touched the nadir of absurdity with the late Wilson Barrett, who, after a long and strenuous contemplation of Shakespeare's text, changed "The air bites shrewdly. It is very cold" into "The air bites shrewdly. Is it very cold?"

We are suffering at the present time from a fear of emotion in art and an undue admiration of mere cleverness. This is affecting every form of art. What is really wrong with highbrows (and let me remind some of our readers and the editor of a

contemporary, that a highbrow in music is not a man with ordinary good taste as they and he appear to think) is their glorification of the newer intellectual idea. Like those of political economists, their theories of art would be wonderful if they knew anything at all about life; but, alas, human nature is unpleasant to the highbrow, for which reason he loves to be in a minority. He is as much afraid of emotion as an old lady of a dog-fight, and in nearly every instance I have come across he is a physical failure of one kind or another. In depriving Schumann's *Concerto* of sentimentality Cortot has robbed it of emotion. A highbrow might retort that the sentiment and the emotion were one and the same, and that the only mistake Cortot has made is in playing such a *démodé* piece of music. However, when all arguments about interpretation have ended in both sides being unconvinced, both sides must admit Cortot's wonderful execution; and in this concerto he thumped less than he thumped in *Carnaval*. Of course, what one misses in a concerto as reproduced on the gramophone is the visual thrill that comes from seeing the movement of the whole orchestra re-entering after solo passages. It is curious that in all the concertos so far recorded, while the soloist, be he violinist or pianist, is helped by the gramophone, the orchestra is ruined. The immediate contrast between a solo instrument and the whole orchestra both emerging from the same small aperture is too full of disillusionment. This is a problem much graver to my mind than the angle of the needle or the alignment of the track. Does the orchestra really buzz more in a concerto than in a symphony, or is that buzzing effect exaggerated by the disproportion between what our mind's ear as well as our actual ear is asked to accept? Putting aside for the moment the question of the cost, I wonder if anybody has considered the feasibility of recording an orchestra on different records, strings on one, wood-wind on another, brass on another, percussion on another, and playing all these four records simultaneously with a four-horned instrument. I should like to hear some of our acoustic theorists and motor-synchronisers on this.

If Cortot's tendency has been to take out the sentiment, the tendency of the Lerner Quartet has been to add to it. This has been particularly true of their snippets, so that once or twice when they have had a sweet melody to play they have been like over-anxious hostesses, who, when a guest has declared for sugar in his tea, have given him four lumps. That, however, is not the case in the great Beethoven quartet that was issued by Columbia last November. When they are offering not a cup of afternoon tea, but a banquet, they make no mistake with the sugar. These five records are superb, and their importance to musical education exceeds anything that the gramophone has yet produced. To praise such music is like praising a canto of Dante.

These last quartets of Beethoven are among the most sublime achievements of the human spirit. To have them on the gramophone is to be given the key of a great park to which we have hitherto only had access on certain days at fixed hours, and in which we have only been able to roam along permitted paths. I had just written the last sentence when the January records of the Vocalion Company reached me, and on four records I find the same great quartet played by the London String Quartet. When this sort of thing happens I feel like the gentleman who was given three wishes by a fairy and made a mess of it in his embarrassment.

I must express an emphatic preference for the Columbia issue, but it must not be forgotten that it costs 37s. 6d., whereas the Vocalion only costs 18s. Such a difference in price makes this unfortunate duplication less regrettable than it might have been.

After the great Beethoven *Quartet in C minor* I cannot get up much enthusiasm over the *Idylls* of Frank Bridge as played by the Virtuoso Quartet and published by H.M.V. on three records; but I hope that the issue in four records of Beethoven's first quartet means that H.M.V. and the Catterall Quartet are going to give us the first six Beethoven quartets complete. If not, it would be much better if they had given us the fourth or fifth, which are not nearly complete, or the very injudiciously cut sixth. Mr. Primrose and Mr. Templemann gave us a beautiful performance of Bach's *Sonata in A* which was, moreover, extremely well recorded by H.M.V. on two records. Mr. Tertis gave us his arrangement for the viola of Brahms' *Sonata in F* for clarinet and piano on two 10in. records and one 12in. It is an excellent piece of recording, and although at present I must confess to finding it a little dull, I think I shall soon get to like it very much. At the same time, I rather wish that we could have some of these sonatas and trios written for the less usual instruments played as they were originally intended to be played by the composer. In order to be able to appreciate orchestral music it is important to learn from solo performances the capacities of each instrument. I would not be without the delicious Columbia excerpt from Brahms' *Trio in E flat* played by Catterall, Squire and Murdoch, but I feel sure that I should have enjoyed it even more if the horn had taken the place of the 'cello.

Of other chamber music this quarter there is a complete version of the *Andante* from Dvořák's *Quartet in F* occupying two sides of a record instead of, as usual, only one, from the Parlophone Company. And from them comes the *Andante* of Brahms' *Quartet in B flat*, which is new to the gramophone. This is a beautiful record. By the way, I might suggest that those correspondents who have written to say that they cannot enjoy Brahms should get hold of two Parlophone records called *Memories of*

Brahms, in which many of his melodies are treated as restaurant music by the Edith Lorand Orchestra; they will be surprised to hear what good restaurant music they make. But, of course the restaurant music par excellence is to be found on the Parlophone records of Marek Weber. This is really delightful, and none of the light music published by any other recording company can come near it.

Gustav Holst's oriental suite called *Beni Mora* which the Columbia issued on two records, is pleasant impressionistic music, but I find that I do not want to hear it often. The gramophone has done a great disservice to most of our modern composers. One gets bored by the lack of pattern in it. However, that is a malady of the age, and in pessimistic moments I am tempted to believe that the artistic impulse has nearly exhausted itself, and that soon art will be stifled by science.

From Columbia comes a record of Gounod's *Mirella Overture*, but it is much too expensive at 7s. 6d., and there is no reason why the present floods should extend to gramophone records. The second side of this one is a glassy waste. One of the melodies in this overture seems to my ear exactly the same as one of Edward German's *Henry VIII. Dances*. Is it my ignorance that does not recognise a pastoral tune that is the common property of Europe? Also from Columbia I commend Hermann Finck's *Chopiniana*, which will give a good deal of pleasure. Connoisseurs should not miss the two Columbia records of the Kedroff Quartet, two particularly fine examples of quartet singing. Perhaps I should have starred the latest H.M.V. Chaliapine 10in. record. *Down the Petersky* and *Dubinushka* are both thrilling. I don't think many people will want to hear the last H.M.V. Fleta record very often, but it is interesting in its way, and there is a remarkably fine piece of recording, particularly of the guitar accompaniment.

Among other songs, Tokatyan is at his best in the *Flower Song* and *O Paradiso*. This is one of the Vocalion pink labels and in spite of the accompaniment is wonderful value at 5s. 6d. I am entirely defeated by the present system of Vocalion colouring. I thought they were going to have them either pink or black, but they now seem to have abandoned the black for a heavy green, on which it is quite impossible to read the words, except in broad daylight. This green is particularly inappropriate for dance records. Rosing makes an impressive re-appearance for Vocalion double-sided Celebrities in Moussorgsky's grim song, *Field-Marshal Death* and *Non, Pagliaccio, non son*, and I can particularly recommend the 10in. Vocalion record of John Buckley singing Wallace's *Rebel* on the one side and two jolly songs of Martin Shaw on the other. Good clear easy baritone singing this. Will not he give us some of the *Songs of the North*, for which I ask from time to time? *The Lament for Maclean of Ardgour* is the one I particu-

larly want. I hope I have not left out any vocal records that deserve special mention this quarter. The second Elsie Suddaby record from H.M.V. did not appeal to me as much as her first one, and this is true of the last two Bettendorf records from Parlophone. But this does not mean that they are not all first-class records, for they are. I don't care for John Perry, who is the latest Parlophone addition, but all their other vocal records are good. In October the Vocalion gave us a record by Fachiri and Jelly d'Aranyi of the third movement of the Bach *Concerto in C minor* for two violins, and the first movement of a sonata for two violins by Pugnani, an eighteenth century composer. In January the other two movements of this sonata appeared as an unexpected treat, and I am hoping that we shall get the other two movements of the concerto. No doubt we shall, if the public supports these two records of magnificent ensemble playing and first-class recording. Do not miss these records; they are really very good indeed.

The last Galli-Curci of *Pretty Mocking Bird* and a tiresome aria from *Dinorah* is not one of her best. I had the pleasure of meeting the diva in Dublin where I regret to say she did not make a success. "Che popolo apatico" (What an apathetic race!) she exclaimed to me, and when I assured her that the Dublin audience was with the Glasgow audience considered the finest in the British Isles, she evidently didn't believe me. And when I suggested that her programme had been badly chosen, she apparently understood me to mean that it should have been more popular, whereas she had really offended the audience by singing *Just a song at twilight* for an encore. She opened her programme with some of the stock old English songs like *My lovely Celia*, all of which it must be confessed she sang dully. Then she sang a Wolf song, movingly I thought, though I fancy that a Wolf expert would have had none of it. Then at last she sang one of her familiar arias, the *Polonaise* from *Mignon*, for which as an encore she gave *Viene, Carmé*, which was silly of her, because in the first place it is not a soprano song, and in addition to that she sang it very badly. In fact it was not until her last item, when she gave the *Shadow Song* from *Dinorah* that the audience really believed it was Galli-Curci at all, as you might say. This was the first genuine encore she had, and all she gained she took away by singing *Just a song at twilight* to celebrate it. She wore a lovely cloth of gold dress and looked perfectly charming with her big Spanish comb, but nobody seems to have taught her how to take the stage. You were aware of something bright that began to sing before the audience had time to realise who had entered and give her the reception to which her fame entitled her. It was that bad entrance which started the whole concert wrong, on top of which came the old English songs with which she opened so dully. When we

were talking afterwards I asked her which was her most popular record, and she told me it was *Lo, here the gentle lark*, at which I sighed to myself. I then asked her why she had never sung for the gramophone the great aria from *Norma, Casta Diva*. This seemed to strike her as a happy idea, and she said she should do it when she got back to America, but I could not help asking myself why on earth none of the quidnuncs of the Gramophone Company had suggested this aria, of which at present we have only Boninsegna's version in the Columbia catalogue, though I have an old H.M.V. record of Sembrich's as well. And this is the loveliest of all soprano arias. Mme. Galli-Curci expressed her great appreciation of the London audience and rather took me aback by alluding to its *raffinatezza* (refinement of taste), a quality which I had not hitherto associated with an Albert Hall audience. I kept off the subject of the London critics who had indulged at her expense in one of those splendid bursts of unanimity with which from time to time they bolster up their timid individual judgments, and reassure themselves that they really do know what they are talking about. Word had gone round that Galli-Curci sang flat, and for several days after her first concert I was astonished to find what wonderful ears for music all the paragraphists had, though that was a talent of which I should never have suspected them. By the way, I will take this opportunity of reminding two of our correspondents who have expressed their dismay at finding mutually contradictory opinions expressed by the reviewers and myself, that this is not a subtle method of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. If a reader is a connoisseur of singing he will be wise to follow Mr. Herman Klein rather than myself, for Mr. Klein has forgotten more about singing than I ever knew. If a reader is a man of genuine musical taste or knowledge, he will be wiser to follow N. P. or P. P. But if a reader only wants to spend his money for the purpose of giving himself pleasure and is not too easily shocked by the sins of the oboe or clarinet, or by a bad *portamento*, he will find me always fallible and often inconsistent, but at any rate entirely uninfluenced by anyone else's opinion, for I hate to go bumping and bleating along the road of criticism with a lot of other sheep. . . . And while I have been writing these words the diva's maid has packed her last dress in one of the big American trunks that stand about the hotel sitting-room like the ruins of an old abbey, the diva herself has said how much she dreads the crossing, and I have not begged her again to sing the *Norma* aria, but to send out at once before the shops close to buy a box of Mothersill's, for the idea of a seasick nightingale is painful to me. Her dark eyes grow bright with the reflection of my enthusiasm for this remedy and her own hope, and as I close the door behind me I carry away a memory of a delicately carved piece of ivory.

THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

“Messiah” and “Elijah”

NOTHING is to be gained by wishing for or regretting the impossible. That fact I am bearing pretty constantly in mind as I pen these articles, because I am dreadfully tempted, when I listen to new records of old music, to become lachrymose over the absence of phonographic evidence of what great singing was like half a century ago. Mere comparisons are of so little value to those who have not heard *both* the things that are compared; and it is my object in these pages to deal in comparisons that can actually be made by the reader as well as by myself. I hope it will be allowed by those who peruse me regularly that I am not exclusively a “praiser of times past.” I have laid some rather thick laurels upon the heads of living opera-singers, whilst recollecting vividly how their predecessors sang the same pieces before them, and criticising them no less impartially on that account. But this month I am not going to write about operatic records. I am going for once to change over to oratorio; and it is, I fancy, sufficiently notorious that the deterioration in oratorio-singing has been far steeper in its downward curve than that observable in opera. There are two very good reasons for the deterioration. One is that oratorio is no longer the tremendous popular attraction that it used to be; the other, that the operatic star of bygone days, who was equally the star of oratorio, does not now find it worth while to master both branches. It may be some time yet before the true traditions of the *Messiah* and *Elijah* become lost, because these two masterpieces are still frequently performed, and, so far as vocal traditions of any sort can be conveyed by the printed page, they have been set down with tolerable clearness and accuracy by the late Mr. Randegger in his Novello editions. The pity is that no amount of “editing,” however careful and conscientious, can register anything beyond dynamic effects, speed measurements, pauses, and the ordinary marks of expression. These things will not afford either the student or the amateur the remotest idea of how Jenny Lind, for instance, sang *I know that my Redeemer liveth* or *Hear ye, Israel*; how Tietjens sang *Rejoice greatly*; how Patey and Trebelli sang *He was despised* or *O rest in the Lord*; how Sims Reeves sang *Comfort ye* and *If with all your hearts*; how Santley sang *Why do the nations* and *It is*

enough. These glorious examples of a fast-disappearing art lie buried either in the limbo of the past or in the memories of a few veterans in whose ears they are still ringing clear and strong.

But enough of the past. The question I would like answered is, why does the average quality of oratorio records to-day stand on an infinitely lower plane than that of operatic records? Do the leading gramophone companies take the same trouble over the one that they do over the other? They will probably tell you that it would not pay them to do so, much less to invest a similar amount of capital in each. The latter is a fair business argument, no doubt; but it does not quite answer my question. I will put it another way. Is the talent now available, even if the gramophone companies were willing to pay the price for it? Could they induce the operatic favourites of the hour to study and sing oratorio airs if they wanted to? I doubt either proposition. So far, then, it is not their fault; but still I cannot acquit them altogether, for the reason that the lists of oratorio records in their catalogues at the present moment are deplorably inadequate. Even those of the still popular works with which I am now dealing are neither representative nor anything like complete. They are, I suppose, sung by the best available native artists—the same who are usually engaged to sing them at the festivals, at the Albert Hall, at Queen’s Hall, and elsewhere. But the omissions are such as leap to the eyes. Will it be believed that I have sought everywhere, and sought in vain, for a soprano solo from either oratorio?

The only explanation of this serious *lacuna* that I can put forward is the unwillingness of any popular concert soprano to launch her vocal barque (no pun intended!) upon the troublous waters of *Rejoice greatly* or *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. Both are extremely hard to sing on the concert platform; and to make a perfect record of the “divisions” of the one or the long-sustained phrases of the other would probably be harder still. Beyond this guess my baffled imagination refuses to soar. Our contemporary Handelian singers, male as well as female, are not, with very rare exceptions, reared nowadays on the exercises of the florid Italian school. They are not equal to attacking the awkward runs invented by the Saxon master with the beautiful precision, the delightful sense of certainty, smooth-

ness, and easy control, the steady flow of pure, unruffled tone that distinguished the *coloratura* of our great English oratorio vocalists in the past. But these excuses do not apply in the case of *Hear ye, Israel* or the duet for Elijah and the Widow, which are really written on a straightforward vocal line, and therefore presumably not beyond the powers of the modern concert soprano. Why they should have been altogether overlooked passes my comprehension. Their absence intensifies my feeling of regret at the inadequacy of the selections I am about to notice, and I can only add a hope that ere long this state of affairs will be remedied. If it pays to bring out complete operas for the gramophone, so, in my opinion, will it pay to bring out complete sets of other oratorios besides *The Dream of Gerontius*, and especially of such perennial favourites as *Messiah* and *Elijah*. Perhaps in the meantime some of our budding sopranos (I need not mention names) will set to work to acquire the requisite flexibility and facility of technique for doing justice to these missing solos.

All I can do at present is to say a few words about each of such existing records as I have been able to obtain; taking them in the order in which they would occur in a performance of the work. My object is, of course, to enable lovers of these two immortal compositions—or those desirous of playing selections from them—to form their own conclusions as to which discs it will best be worth while to procure. The accompaniments, I may add, are without exception orchestral.

“MESSIAH”

1. *Comfort ye and Ev'ry valley* (two-sided discs).

Tudor Davies (H.M.V., D.777) is robust rather than tender; he menaces more than he comforts. His fine voice is over-covered and not steady enough. He delivers his message with authority and decision, if with a dead level of loud tone.

Lewis James (Voc. K.05070) is another Welsh tenor who enunciates well but darkens his vowels too much—a common fault with most of these singers. The runs are less accurate than those of Mr. Davies, but the intonation is never faulty, the rhythm always well marked. The style generally lacks distinction, and every “e” penetrates like an arrow into a target.

Frank Mullings (Col. L.1452). The recitative is better than the air, despite the absence of *messa di voce* on long notes. There is a welcome measure of restraint; the quality is agreeable, the voice fairly steady, and the words are clear. The runs in the air are slurred and noisy, and one objects to the comical aspirate where there are two notes on the first syllable of “valley,” converting the word into “va-hal-lee.” Otherwise a creditable record.

2. *Thus saith the Lord and But who may abide*

Robert Radford (H.M.V., E.277, two-sided, 10in.) gives an admirable rendering in the traditional manner of both recit. and air. His diction is clear, his phrasing precise and clean. The only faults are over-closed vowels (with the resultant sombre tone) and a tendency to accentuate and dwell too long on final syllables.

Norman Allin (Col. L.1453, one side) does wrong to omit *Thus saith the Lord*, a pronouncement as vital to the meaning of *Messiah* as is Elijah's opening recitative to what follows. (It is to economise space and leave *Why do the nations* for the other side.) In the singing there is no restraint of any sort, but tone at all costs—i.e., rough tone, without religious sentiment or expression, *ff* throughout. I leave it at that.

3. *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and O thou that tellest good tidings.*

Louise Homer (H.M.V., D.B.303, one side) also does wrong to leave out the recit., but her delivery of the air is very fine. Here is a genuine contralto tone, and she puts rare nobility of style and expression into her oratorio work. The important A natural in the air comes out clear and strong, which is more than can be said for the English singers who follow. The whole piece is very smoothly given.

Edna Thornton (H.M.V., D.781, one side) includes the recitative, but her tone all through is strangely uneven and woolly, with no clear resonance anywhere. I tried it both on the Sonora Model and Columbia Grafonola with similar results.

Carrie Herwin (Col. 915, one side; reverse *He was despised*) forces her powerful tone unnecessarily and often pays for it with a tremulous medium, but her singing has abundant life and spirit. She also takes the air at top speed, which matters less in this than other solos.

4. *For behold, darkness and The people that walked.*

Robert Radford (H.M.V., E.304, two sided 10in. disc) is irreproachable in the recitative and effective in the air; dark enough for Hunding in the one and rollicking enough for Don Bartolo in the other. The excessive speed of the latter is its only blemish.

Norman Allin (Col. L.1446) devotes one side to this air, the reverse to *The trumpet shall sound*, whereof a word later. But, according to Mr. Allin's method of slurring Handel's quavers, the people did not walk, they positively *rolled* in darkness! The *portamento* is pressed downwards and upwards with equally unrelenting force; also with a huge amplitude of tone and vast nasal resonance, which a soft needle only slightly tends to modify. Balance with the orchestra is thus entirely lost. This is realism carried to excess.

5. *Then shall the eyes and He shall feed His flock.*

Kirkby Lunn (H.M.V., D.B.506) omits the recitative, but brings all the resource of her fine organ and ripe experience to the interpretation of the air. She sings it with a clear, bright tone, with few nuances of light and shade, but in a broad, big style and expressive manner that well befits her theme. (N.B.—All the three contraltos who sing this piece begin the "He" with a penetrating vowel "e" that stands out like a splash of vermilion.)

Leila Megane (H.M.V., D.657) gains by vouchsafing the recit., and loses solely because she is made to hurry the lovely air, which, however, she sings beautifully. Her tone and words are quite admirable.

Louise Homer (H.M.V., D.B.301 one side; reverse *He was despised*) is heard to great advantage in this record. Her rendering is complete, unhurried, and in the legitimate oratorio style. Very few American singers can command the Handelian phrasing with equal purity, and, bar some tremolo, the quality of the tone is rich and luscious.

Come unto Him is conspicuous by its absence.

6. *He was despised.*

Louise Homer (H.M.V., D.B. 301) takes this ineffable melody at a faster tempo than tradition warrants, thereby lessening by a shade its wonderful pathos. Otherwise she sings it well. The words are distinct, save the ending consonants, particularly the "f" in "grief."

Carrie Herwin (Col. 915) adopts an even quicker pace, while the expression has little if any depth of religious fervour. The timbre of the voice is rich, but loud and a trifle unyielding where delicacy and refinement are called for.

7. *Thy rebuke, Behold and see, He was cut off, But Thou didst not leave.*

Arthur Jordan (Col. 973 two-sided disc) is the only tenor who gives the whole of the Passion music; and remarkably well he does it. A soft needle is necessary on the Grafonola to modify the power of his resonant tone, that is all. I have naught but praise for his poignant, manly expression, his well-balanced phrases, his unfailing sense of contrast. He has a pure tenor, and his vowel-tone is free from exaggeration.

John Harrison (H.M.V., E.55) sings *But Thou didst not leave* with plenty of spirit, if with more vigour than discretion. He requires a soft needle or else the open air. The pressure never diminishes.

8. *Why do the nations.*

Clarence Whitehill (H.M.V., D.B.435) is an excellent artist; but Wagnerian and Handelian singing have little in common, especially where flexibility is needed. The tone is good, but the triplet runs are a mere scramble.

Malcolm McEachern (Voc. D.02087) is another scrambler, but a much rougher one. It is a fine voice with a slap-dash style. The runs are not only uneven, but the "rage" has no "g," and where breath is taken the vowel changes.

Horace Stevens (Voc. D.02145) succeeds fairly well in the runs and enunciates distinctly, despite the intemperate speed. He has a big voice, but does not overdo things, which is a good deal in favour of this record. There is rhythm, too, in his animation and vigour.

Norman Allin (Col. 1453) has ample opportunity here for his stentorian tone, and, were the triplets less slurred, the rest would count as this artist's best contribution to the present selection.

9. *He that dwelleth in Heaven; Thou shalt break them.*

Arthur Jordan (Col. 978) is again very satisfying here. The air demands ease of production, sureness of attack and intonation, bright ringing head notes. This singer has them all; and he declines to interpolate the high A at the end which Braham and Sims Reeves were so fond of. Perhaps he is right; still the tradition goes back a century.

John Harrison (H.M.V., E.55) is less reticent; but, unfortunately, in getting up to the A, he rather smudges the passage. However, in this piece his natural energy is well placed, and he declaims it with just the right measure of spirit.

10. *The trumpet shall sound.*

Norman Allin (Col. 1446) merits the exact criticism last used. What are faults elsewhere become excellences here, and the effect of the duet between the trumpet and the human voice is just what Handel intended—something that represents "waking the dead." But use a soft needle, unless your room is a hall.

Horace Stevens (Voc. D.02105) also gives his *obbligato* a good race for power. Nevertheless, his fine bass voice remains clear and vibrant to the end, and his declamation no less solid and free. I append a list of the available choruses:—

Glory to God and For unto us a Child is born (H.M.V., D.778).

Surely He hath borne our griefs and His yoke is easy (H.M.V., D.779).

All we like sheep have gone astray and Lift up your heads, O ye gates (H.M.V., D.780).

Hallelujah, Leeds Festival Choir (H.M.V., C.481).

Hallelujah, Sheffield Choir (H.M.V., C.930).

And the Glory of the Lord and Hallelujah, New York Oratorio Chorus (Col. 451).

Glory to God in the highest and Hallelujah, Sheffield and Leeds United Choir (Col. 331).

"ELIJAH"

1. *Ye people, rend your hearts and If with all your hearts.*

Walter Hyde (H.M.V., D.108) displays a sound oratorio style in this lovely tenor number. Over-pressure hardens his tone somewhat in the recitative, but not in the air, which he invests with the right degree of yearning, wistful expression. The contrasts of tone are unusually vivid.

Arthur Jordan (Col. 807) declaims and breathes so well that there is no need for excessive *portamento* or for the sentimentality which disfigures the return to the subject in the air. On the whole, however, an artistic rendering.

Hardy Williamson (Voc. K.05071) sustains very smoothly and with a nice tone. It is a pity his "dialectic" vowels have not been corrected.

Evan Williams (H.M.V., D.B.454) had such a glorious tenor voice that to hear it again in this record makes one grudge his omission of the recit. The air is too slow and drags; but it is sung with intense sincerity and charm, and there is a wonderful touch of mystery in the "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!"

2. *Lord God of Abraham.*

Clarence Whitehill (H.M.V., D.B.435) has precisely the nobility of tone and delivery for this broad strain of melody. It is a worthy effort, albeit the listener with a long memory will agree that it lacks the fervent appeal of Santley, who sang it rather quicker.

Robert Radford (H.M.V., D.267) has the right tempo and is altogether at his best here. A fine record.

Horace Stevens (Voc. D.02105) very properly begins with "Draw near, all ye people" and uses a more "covered" tone than usual. This, with the aid of a soft needle, brings out to advantage a superb quality of voice in a most impressive rendering.

Malcolm McEachern (Voc. K.05130) imparts an abundance of tone and sincerity of feeling to his well-sustained phrases, which require a large auditorium. It is a pity his English vowels savour so strongly of the West; they need refining.

3. *Is not His word like a fire?*

Robert Radford (H.M.V., E.76) is again in capital voice in this record, and the tone is powerfully sustained to the end.

Horace Stevens (Voc. R.6145) gives a too staccato rendering. His voice is strong and resonant, and the words are distinct; but one feels that the "hammer that breaketh the rock" also breaks the phrase "into pieces." However, the fault is not serious enough to spoil a good effort.

4. *It is enough.*

Charles W. Clark (Col. 1096) has a rather light baritone for the demands of this sublime air; he

also needs more distinction of style. But his voice is very steady, and in the middle section he displays adequate dramatic feeling.

Clarence Whitehill (H.M.V., D.B.438) is quite in his element in this touching farewell to earth, which reminds me, in many ways of his splendid *Wotan's Farewell to Brünnhilde*. Many vowels are over-closed, but the singing as a whole is finely dramatic and instinct with true pathos.

David Bispham (Rena, Berlin, 154) is the third American vocalist to provide a record of this air, with a voice that now, alas, is "still." I have had it in my possession several years, and am not certain whether it is now obtainable. But it is magnificent—a marvel of artistic singing and heartfelt expression.

Horace Stevens (Voc. D.02145) gives an original rather than a traditional reading. It is too full of *sforzandos* and *staccatos* for my taste, but in a large auditorium would doubtless sound well.

5. *O rest in the Lord.*

Kirkby Lunn (H.M.V., D.B.504) does not drag this inspired melody as so many contraltos do, but adopts just the right speed. It brings out the luscious quality of her medium to perfection, and she phrases it with true religious feeling.

Carrie Herwin (Col. 2626) hurries the tempo and employs a colourless but straightforward method. The voice itself is sympathetic.

Louise Homer (H.M.V., D.B.302) has somehow failed to achieve a satisfactory record of a piece that she can sing well. The voice sounds thin and pinched, the effect generally noisy and unsteady. I tried this on two machines and with several needles, but without improvement.

6. *For the mountains shall depart.*

Robert Radford (H.M.V., E.76) has, I fancy, transposed this down a semitone. Anyhow the voice is not at its best and the rhythm is dragged.

Horace Stevens (Voc. R.6145), more reticent than usual, employs the *messa di voce* here with admirable skill, and phrases like an artist a melody that is always trying for the departing Elijah.

7. *Then shall the righteous.*

Evan Williams (H.M.V., D.A.393) had an amazing *sostenuto* and a glorious tone, but neither did he display to good advantage in this difficult piece. It caught him at a moment when he was weak alike in accent and diction.

Hardy Williamson (Voc. K.05071) sings this with an excess of sentimentality and too slowly. It requires before all things manly vigour.

Choruses.—None. But I recommend an excellent record (H.M.V., C.481) of the overture to the oratorio, preceded by Elijah's opening recitative, finely sung by Peter Dawson. HERMAN KLEIN.

PIEDIGROTTA & NEAPOLITAN SONGS

By F SHARP

IN pagan days, when Naples was part of Magna Græcia, and was called Neapolis, the people were as fond of festivals as they are now, and among many that have survived to this day is the one which is now Piedigrotta. The birth of Venus was celebrated with processions to her grotto at Pozzuoli (or Puteoli, as it then was), with blowing of shells, songs, and feasting. To-day the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin is celebrated with processions to her grotto at Pozzuoli, songs, feasting, and the blowing of trumpets. The *tofa* which is the large shell used in Greek days, has been almost entirely superseded by the *trommettella*, the noisy trumpet. There are not nearly enough shells to go round.

At the grotto the poets would recite their poems, and songs would be sung, and no doubt there was a prize for the popular favourite, as there is now. As to the rest of the festival—Petronius gives a vivid account of it in the *Satyricon*. It is a tame business nowadays by comparison, but still has its moments.

The Church has ever made a practice of erecting chapels on notorious sites, another example of which is the chapel and gold statue set in the midst of the ruins of the Villa Jovis at Capri, where the great Emperor Tiberius got himself so talked about in his old age. The history of the Christian festival is a little obscure, and it is not till the fourteenth century that we find the name Piedigrotta, which means "the foot of the grotto." Whatever the origin of the word, Naples, always one of the noisiest of cities, surpasses itself for those forty-eight hours of the 7th and 8th September, for naturally the trumpets keep the vigil from earliest dawn. An elderly Englishman of demure and studious habit once found himself wedged in the festive crowd that surged down the narrow Via Roma like a swollen torrent. He bought the largest trumpet he could find and blew it louder than anyone else—and saved his reason.

Moreover, he never went to bed that night.

There are many interesting prints of the procession, which, especially in the time of the Bourbons, was a gorgeous affair, led by the King in a gold chariot, followed by the Court in gala attire, and the whole population. At the grotto was the *gara*, the song competition; feasting was kept up all night (but I fancy the King and Court retired early) and Mass was said at dawn.

The first authentic Piedigrotta song to come down to us is *Michelemma*, composed by Salvator

Rosa, the painter, in the seventeenth century. It is not till the beginning of the nineteenth century that the two best-known early Piedigrotta songs appear. These were *Fenesta che lucive* (*Window that shone*) and *Te voglio ben assaie* (*I am very fond of you*). Settembrini wrote in 1839: "There were three good things this year, the railway, gas, and *Te voglio ben assaie*." Raffaele Sacco wrote the words, and the musical phrase is identical with one that is sung by Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula*. This does not say that Bellini wrote it, any more than one can say that *Fenesta che lucive* is by him, because its first phrase is used in *Ah! non credea mirarti* from the same opera. Bellini collected old Sicilian and Neapolitan airs and very wisely made use of them in his operas. I cannot find that *Te voglio ben* has ever been recorded, but there is a Caruso record of *Fenesta che lucive* which is now in the Historical Catalogue, and Fernando de Lucia sings it, with the excellent *Canta pe' me* on the other side. (This last has been splendidly recorded by Caruso, with his cheerful interpretation of *Addio a Napoli* on the other side.) Another song which must belong to the Bellini period, though I cannot trace it, is the anonymous *Lu Cardillo* (*The Goldfinch*). This is a lovely little song, quite exquisitely sung by de Lucia.

Several decades passed without anything striking, till Denza roused the world with *Funiculi-Funiculà*. This was followed by a burst of song, good and bad, which has never ceased. Among the poets of this fertile period shine the names of Salvatore di Giacomo, Ferdinando Russo, Libero Bovio, and Ernesto Murolo—all living. Among the musicians A. E. Mario and E. de Curtis, who are poets as well, de Capua, de Leva, Mario Costa, Nutile, and Gambardella. Prize-winners of this century are *Tu Sola* (1906) with words by Ferdinando Russo and music by Gambardella, which is not the *Tu Sola* sung by Gigli, but is recorded by de Lucia, with *Se chiagnere me siente*, prize-winner of 1907 also by Gambardella, with verses by Bovio and Murolo, on the other side. This is surely one of the saddest of songs—"If you hear me crying in my sleep, do not wake me"—and de Lucia sings it with intense pathos. Words and music are of a classic simplicity. Nearly all Neapolitan songs are in the minor key. It may seem strange that this apparently light-hearted race should like its songs sad, but perhaps it is not so light-hearted as it appears to be. There is a vein of melancholy

running through even such cheerful music as *Surdato 'nnamurato* (*The soldier in love*), and the contrast of its jolly accompaniment and the heart-rending break in Gigli's voice provides a rich variety of emotion.

One must be in the right frame of mind to appreciate Neapolitan songs. A generous emotional atmosphere is necessary, and there must be no sham highbrow present to mutter "sobstuff" when Gigli sings *Tu sola* or Caruso *Perchè?* The Neapolitan *canzone* has as many admirable qualities as the British folk-song that we all feel so safe in admiring. It is like that brilliant flower called *Tigridia* that blooms intensely for half an hour or so, and dies—it expresses with equal intensity an emotion that does not, that could not, last longer than the few minutes the song takes to sing. But it is so deeply felt whether the singer sings of his faithless Catari, or his beloved Napoli, that the listener must surrender his heart to the artist for the moment, to sigh with him, to laugh with him, and perhaps to die with him. Neapolitan dialect poems are wonders of economy in word and phrase, packed with colour and significance, and impossible to translate adequately, because half their beauty is the music of the words. Those lucky ones who know the South have only to shut their eyes, forget the London fog, and get into the right atmosphere for listening to these fascinating songs. For those who have no memories to conjure up, I will try to set a scene.

Santa Lucia is the pleasure port of Naples, and has been celebrated over and over again in songs, the best-known of which is, of course, *Santa Lucia*. The sun has set, after flooding the Bay with red-gold wine and wreathing Vesuvius with purple grapes, leaving a rich glow behind Baiae. This lingers long after the arrival of an enormous full moon, which hangs over Capri, coldly washing with platinum rays all traces of the sun's gold from the sea. The harbour of Santa Lucia is bounded on the seaward side by the famous Castello dell'Ovo, where the lost books of Livy have, after all, not been found. On this island, which is joined to Santa Lucia by a jetty, are restaurants on the edge of the harbour, and it is on the terrace of one of these that you are dining in the pleasantest company you can think of. You have had Zuppa di Vongola (mussels) which was flavoured almost entirely with garlic, but as you were not aware of this you were able to enjoy it with a clear conscience. This will be followed by *maccheroni* and perhaps some rather tough meat, but everything will be washed down comfortably with plenty of Vesuvian wine.

It is a *festa* night, Sunday perhaps, and all Naples is out enjoying the perfect evening. Opposite, along the Via Caracciolo and Santa Lucia, is an endless procession of carriages of

every conceivable size and shape. The Neapolitan has no self-consciousness, and will be seen in the most absurd turn-out possible, though, whatever its shape, it is always smart, and the horse, pony, or diminutive donkey that draws it is splendidly groomed. This applies only to the pleasure craft, of course, not the poor work-a-day horse, whose lot, however, has much improved in late years.

Every now and then a cutter slips in like a moonbeam from a long sun-baked day in Capri, Ischia or somewhere on the Sorrentine coast, and folds its wings under the shadow of the Italia Club. There is nothing whiter than the sails of these lovely yachts, except perhaps the trousers of the young Neapolitans who bring them in so skilfully. Just as the grey holiday bags of Eton and Cambridge are symbolic of the English climate so are these exquisitely cut garments of Naples. These slim youths, with their brilliant handkerchiefs and blazers, always spotless, their mahogany limbs and high spirits, are children of the Sun. Fortunate beings! They inherit the optimism of their race, which could hardly have survived the long series of oppressions and tyrannies to which through the centuries it was subjected if it had not been blessed with the gift "to laugh and sing, to amuse itself—and forget."

At the other end of the scale is the so-called *lazzarone* whom no sanitary authority can redeem from a state of delicious dirt. He is not so dangerous as we have been brought up to think, and though he nearly always carries a knife, he does not necessarily plunge it into our backs as we turn the corner. "The knife is a question of sentiment," said a Neapolitan to me. If a man betrays you, you brand him for life (possibly kill him, but this is often an accident). If your sweetheart is unfaithful, you slash her cheek. The victim carries her scars as proudly as a German student... Nearby our restaurant is a humble stall lit by red lamps and decorated with plumes of pampas grass like rosy torches. The stall is arranged with picturesque but uneatable fruit, the most conspicuous and least eatable being the large red water-melon with black seeds. This humble stall is a thing of beauty, and its beauty is as spontaneous as the glory of the Neapolitan washing which on sunny days hangs like banners from balcony to balcony of the narrow streets. It is impossible to convey in words the violent assault that the Bay of Naples makes upon one's sensibilities, and I have only attempted to describe this particular scene because an inevitable accompaniment to it is the Neapolitan song. A band of musicians amuses us through dinner with the latest *canzoni*, and this is a fitting moment to discuss some of the records which I have had the pleasure of hearing in the last month.

Of the H.M.V., the Caruso records come first, for obvious reasons, the least of them being that they

are the most perfect records from the recording point of view, to be had anywhere. *Santa Lucia* has already been mentioned. This has on the other side *Core 'ngrato*, which I consider one of his finest records. Lauri Volpi sings it too, but only one verse. Catari' is cruel and says hard things. Her lover consults a priest, "a saintly person," who advises him to think no more of her. "*Lassala sta, lassala sta*," but it is evident that this advice will not be followed.

Mamma mia, che vo' sape' is a popular favourite. The words are by Ferdinando Russo. *Perchè?*, on the other side is a very good song and one of Caruso's own favourites. He sings all three verses, which are addressed to Carmè. She has stolen his youth—why does she not return to him? He too, is advised by his friends to forget her, but it is obvious that this counsel also has fallen on deaf ears. '*A vucchella*, which means "little mouth," is written by Gabriele d'Annunzio, and is all in charming diminutives, simply asking for a little kiss from that little mouth that is like a little rose, a little faded. In *Cielo turchino* the singer praises the sea under the sun, the moon, and the stars, but—what is the good of it all?—Rosina won't make up her mind. *Luna d'estate*, a melodious Tosti song and *Viene sul mar*, which is no other than *Two lovely black eyes* Italianised, are not particularly Neapolitan, but both are in Caruso's best manner, and the latter has *Pimpinella* on the other side.

Gigli's *Surdato nnamurato*, De Luca's *Nuttata 'e sentimento*, de Gogorza's *Comme se canta a Napule*, are all splendid records, and all have something good on the other side. John McCormack's *Carmè* has had a great success with the Italians who have heard it, though they regret that with his perfect pronunciation of Italian he does not attempt to sing it in dialect. Tita Ruffo's great voice is heard in *Maria Mari*, a very popular song over here, and *Torna a Surriento*, which everybody knows. Sorrento itself is a comparatively dull hole with its gingerbread cliffs and top-heavy row of hotels, but the fishing villages in its neighbourhood are more likely to have inspired the large number of Sorrentine songs than the tourist-haunted place itself.

The Fonotipia Co. has a large and very varied list of Neapolitan songs and it has been interesting to listen to the veteran De Lucia and Anselmi records of fifteen and ten years ago, and compare them with the recent ones of Armando Marescotti, Lauri Volpi, and Pollicino. The scratch in the old days was certainly rather alarming. It has now been almost eliminated without sacrificing any brilliance. For brilliant seems to me the word for the Fonotipia recording. Not an over-tone, not an under-tone, nor any other kind of tone is missed.

I believe if a pin dropped in the recording room we should hear it.

I suppose no one has ever sung Neapolitan songs more artistically than Fernando de Lucia, whose voice, by the way, was discovered in much the same way as was Caruso's. He has about half as much voice as Caruso, and has to contend with the scratch of fifteen years ago, but nothing is more moving than his *Tu sola*, his *Se chiagnere me siente*, and his *Lu cardillo*. *Voce 'e notte* of De Curtis and Gambardella's *Serenata a Surriento* make another good record. All de Lucia's records are worth more than their weight in gold, as examples of perfect taste and a perfect voice, which do not always go together. Another of the older records worth having is Giuseppe Anselmi singing *Uocchi niri* (*Dark eyes*). He sings this most delightfully, and I am not sure that I do not prefer his rendering of *Marechiare* to that of de Lucia. The great baritone, Amato, sings *Chiarastella* and *Vola vola* of de Cristoforo with a wonderful mandoline accompaniment.

A remarkable voice which is new to me is that of Armando Marescotti. It is one of the most "open" voices I have ever heard, and the veracity of the recording is almost uncanny. It is a voice that grows upon one, and should not be judged on a first hearing. *Torna a Marechiare*, by E. Mario, with words by S. di Giacomo—"If it's fine on Sunday let's go and eat on the seashore and I will tell you a heap of things I've got in my mind"—this is delightful, and so is *Notte* which has a refrain of *Te voglio ben*, and so are *Senza Maria* and *Chittare e mare*, both by E. A. Mario.

"Tenore Pollicino" is responsible for one of the gayest and most amusing songs on the list, de Chiara's *Santa Lucia Nova*. I am ignorant enough not to have heard of him before, but I hope I shall hear him again. His sense of rhythm is refreshing. I am glad to see in a late supplement, several records of his, and as he is not in the general catalogue I suppose he is a new acquisition on which Fonotipia is to be congratulated.

To go back for a moment to classical days, I hear a rumour that a Virgilian song was once recorded by the Gramophone Co., with an accompaniment of suitable instruments, surely a possible early Piedigrotta song! I have searched the catalogues in vain. I should like to get hold of it.

There is a great deal more I would like to say about Naples and its music, but space only allows me to thank the two companies for the great enjoyment I have had in listening to their records, and to hope that some of our readers will take the hint from me, and escape, if only in spirit, from the fogs and downpours of England and bask for awhile in the sunny warmth of this exotic music.

A LIST OF RECORDS MENTIONED.

- H.M.V., D.B.140.—Enrico Caruso, *Fenesta che lucive*.
 Fon., A.92715.—Fernando de Lucia, *Fenesta che lucive*.
 Fon., A.92716.—Fernando de Lucia, *Canta pe' me* (de Curtis).
 H.M.V., D.A.10410.—Enrico Caruso, *Canta pe' me* (de Curtis); *Addio a Napoli* (Cottrau).
 Fon., A.92699.—Fernando de Lucia, *Marechiaré* (Tosti).
 Fon., A.92700.—Fernando de Lucia, *Lu Cardillo* (ignoto).
 H.M.V., D.A.310.—John McCormack, *Funiculi, Funiculà* (Denza).
 Fon., A.92721.—Fernando de Lucia, *Tu Sola* (Gambardella).
 Fon., A.92722.—Fernando de Lucia, *Se chiagnere me siente* (Gambardella).
 H.M.V., D.A.224.—Beniamino Gigli, *Surdato nnamurato* (Cannio); *Tu sola* (de Curtis).
 H.M.V., D.B.119 (12in.).—Enrico Caruso, *Mamma mia* (Nutile); *Perche?* (Pennino).
 H.M.V., D.B.142 (12in.).—Enrico Caruso, *Santa Lucia*; *Core 'ngrato* (Carolli).
 Fon., M.N.152021.—Lauri Volpi, *Core 'ngrato* (Carolli).
 H.M.V., D.A.103.—Enrico Caruso, *A vucchella* (Tosti); *O sole mio* (di Capua).
 H.M.V., D.A.105.—Enrico Caruso, *Cielo turchino* (Cioccano); *Amor mio* (Ricciardi).
- H.M.V., D.A.191.—G. de Luca, *Nuttata 'e sentimento* (Capo-longa); *Oi Luna* (Cardillo).
 H.M.V., D.A.179.—E. de Gogorza, *Comme se canta a Napule* (Mario); *Mandulinata* (Paladilhe).
 H.M.V., D.A.455.—John McCormack, *Carmela* (de Curtis).
 H.M.V., D.A.353.—Tita Ruffo, *Maria Mari* (di Capua); *Torna a Surriento* (de Curtis).
 Fon., 92706.—F. de Lucia, *O Marinariello* (Gambardella).
 Fon., 92707.—F. de Lucia, *Torna a Surriento* (de Curtis).
 Fon., A.92702.—F. de Lucia, *Luna nova* (Costa).
 Fon., 92703.—F. de Lucia, *O sole mio* (di Capua).
 Fon., 92709.—F. de Lucia, *Serenata a Surriento* (Gambardella).
 Fon., 92710.—F. de Lucia, *Voce 'e notte* (de Curtis).
 Fon., 62432.—G. Anselmi, *Uocchi niri* (Denza).
 Fon., 62433.—G. Anselmi, *A Marechiaré* (Tosti).
 Fon., 62368.—Pasquale Amato, *Chiarastella* (de Cristoforo); *Vola, vola* (de Cristoforo).
 Fon., A.N.152518.—Armando Marescotti, *Torna a Marechiaré* (Mario); *Chittare e mare* (Mario).
 Fon., A.N.152516.—Armando Marescotti, *Notte* (Mario); *Senza Maria* (Mario).
 Odeon, O.N.83509.—Pollicino, *Santa Lucia Nova* (de Chiara).

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Byrd's Great Service

A correspondent writes:—

St. Margaret's Church was filled to overflowing for the first performance in London of Byrd's *Great Service* by Dr. Whittaker's Newcastle Bach Choir. An unfortunate epidemic had decimated the ranks of the sopranos, which accounted for their somewhat attenuated tone, but generally speaking, the choir did excellently, the tenors especially so. In the solo portions the contrast between the first and second sopranos was too evident—the latter had a beautiful voice, the former had not! Dr. Whittaker's fine conducting and sound musicianship secured a performance which, interpretatively, could hardly have been bettered. He made decided dynamic contrasts; in my judgment rightly, since a uniform rendering of the music would soon lead to monotony.

I cannot avoid the feeling that Byrd was working in shackles; this in spite of many great beauties in the score. Compare the *Gloria* from the *Nunc Dimittis* (E.291) of this service with any of the Latin Church music recorded (E.290 E.305). The *Great Service* is, though contrapuntal or polyphonic in treatment, unpleasantly square and syllabic. This was the condition imposed on Byrd by the Reformers. The beautiful freedom of his Latin music gives way to a suspicion of the Anglican chant idiom—a rigid thing compared to the Gregorian. The seven movements are all in E flat, the harmonic range and vocal compass small, so it is indeed wonderful what the composer has achieved, when these are added to other limitations. I have said that a great crowd filled the church. There is just a danger of a Byrd cult. This is better than the sheer neglect to which he has been subjected in past

years; but we shall need to use discrimination. Everything that is sixteenth century is not gold.

* * *

Complete Operas

A correspondent, writing under a pseudonym, has sent us an "Open Letter to the Gramophone Co., Ltd.", in which he offers the thanks of the buying public for the complete version of *Madam Butterfly* in English. "Carry on the good work," he continues, "with *Tales of Hoffmann*."

"Already you have published the following numbers: *The Legend of Kleinsack* (Tudor Davies), *The Doll's Song* (N. D'Argel, 03404), *Mirror Song* (W. Samuel, 02614), *Barcarolle* (Marsh and Dunlap), *When love is but tender* (W. Hyde), *Antonia's Song* (N. D'Argel), *Thou art flown* (R. Buckman), and choruses on the *Gems*. All quite good, better, in fact, than the *Butterfly* ones. May we suggest as a first addition to these, the wonderful finale of the *Barcarolle* scene commencing—

"With love alas, my heart is beating;

A thousand terrors fill my soul with gloom,

I curse the day, the hour of our meeting;

Within her heart, alas, there lies my doom." . . .

and on the other side the trio from the third act, *Antonia*, *Miracle*, and *Picture*: "Dearest child, list to thy mother's voice."

Congratulations on securing the voice of Constance Willis. When are you going to give us her superb rendering of the *Gavotte* from *Mignon*, "Here in beauty's home am I"? "

We hope that this appeal, and especially the last sentence, will catch the eye of those in authority at Hayes, and even of Miss Willis herself. But our correspondent is evidently referring to an early H.M.V. catalogue for some of the records.

GRAMOPHONE CELEBRITIES

VII.—Sir Henry J. Wood

By TERENCE E. GOODBODY

IN this article I intend to recount to our readers the career of Sir Henry Wood prior to his appointment to the Queen's Hall in 1895. Since this time his existence has been one of such outstanding success that there is not space for more than a very scanty survey, and I want to pass on to his recordings, which should interest lovers of the gramophone even more than an account of the life of such a famous personage.

Sir Henry Wood was born in London on March 3rd, 1870. He was the only son of his parents, who were both English, although his mother was of Celtic origin. Both his parents were musical, his father being an amateur 'cellist, and also a member of the choir at St. Sepulchre, E.C. However, it was to his mother, a talented singer, that Sir Henry owes the greater part of his early musical education. He played the piano, and at the age of six was able to take part in the music of Bach and Haydn. Later on he commenced the study of the organ, and at the age of seventeen he was appointed deputy organist at St. Mary, Aldermanbury. He also gave recitals previous to this at the Fisheries and Inventions Exhibitions in 1883 and 1885 respectively. For the next five years he performed the duties which so many musicians commence, and never manage to free themselves from—namely, giving endless organ recitals and accompanying at second-rate ballad concerts. This kind of life is very apt to damp the enthusiasm of all but the most persistent. During this time Sir Henry devoted himself to composition, but since it had always been his ambition to be a professional conductor, the composition was allowed to slide after a couple of years.

In 1889 Sir Henry obtained his first engagement as conductor. This was with Arthur Rousby's Company, which was appearing at the New English Opera House (now the Palace Theatre). Here he superintended the rehearsals of Sullivan's only grand opera *Ivanhoe*. In August of the same year he toured with the Carl Rosa Company in the provinces. The year 1893 found him back again in London in a much more important position: that of conductor in Lago's opera season at the Olympic Theatre. During this season Sir Henry conducted *Oberon* and *Lohengrin*, and he produced and conducted *Eugene Onégin*, a work which has remained one of his favourites. When this season closed he devoted himself to teaching, until 1894, when at

Bayreuth he became acquainted with Herr Mottl, the Wagnerian conductor, and arrangements were made for him to become musical adviser to Mr. Schulz Curtius for the Queen's Hall Wagner concerts.

We have now arrived at 1895, the year in which Sir Henry Wood first became associated with Mr. Robert Newman at the Queen's Hall, a partnership which has lasted ever since. Previous to this London had been badly provided for musically. There were no concerts for "the man in the street," and the people who patronised concerts were very different from those we stand with in the promenade now. There was the Covent Garden grand season from May to July, which was out of reach financially of the ordinary public. The Richter concerts, of which there were half a dozen during the year, attracted the "High-brow" of the period. Added to these there were the concerts of the Philharmonic Society and the London Symphony Orchestra, the latter of which had not gained the whole-hearted support of the public at this time. These two organisations were responsible for a dozen or so concerts between them. This was practically all the orchestral music to be heard in London prior to 1895. There had been some promenade concerts, conducted by Arditi and others, at Covent Garden some years before. The artistic level was very low; any good works that might gain a hearing were performed amidst the popping of corks and clinking of glasses. Sir Arthur Sullivan tried to improve the standard of music later on, and he performed Beethoven's nine symphonies week by week, but according to a writer in *The Musical Times*; "The music was so good that it hindered the sale of refreshments, and the financial results were proportionately unsatisfactory."

Therefore, in 1895, London was ready for music of a better class, and Sir Henry and Mr. Newman set themselves out to rope in "the men in the street." I look upon all the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE, including the Editor, as belonging to this category. Nearly all of us owe our devotion to music to a chance hearing of a good orchestral record. My first two orchestral records were the *Lohengrin Introduction*, Act 3, played by Sir Henry's Orchestra, and the *Spring Song* and *Bees' Wedding*, played by the Albert Hall Orchestra. This was the beginning of my musical life, and although I didn't get my first impression of an orchestra in the Queen's Hall, but

on the gramophone, I am proud to relate that Sir Henry Wood and Sir Landon Ronald were responsible for it.

The 1895 promenade concerts were a success from the first. The season consisted of forty-nine concerts, and the scheme was as follows: Monday, Wagner; Tuesday, Sullivan; Wednesday, "Classical"; Thursday, Schubert; Saturday, Popular. The orchestra, since it played every night for weeks on end, was able to attain a standard of polish and finesse impossible in a less stable organisation. Sir Henry also introduced the French pitch, which is lower than the one in use now.

Gradually Mr. Newman added symphony concerts on alternate Saturday afternoons, and later the Sunday concerts commenced. We owe Sir Henry and Mr. Newman more for our music than to any other organisation before or since. They have given us most of the first performances of the works of Tchaikovsky, Scriabine, Strauss, Schönberg, Debussy, and Ravel, and they have also given us the opportunity of making ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the older masters, especially Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner. Between 1895 and 1919 over two hundred works by British composers were produced at Queen's Hall. Sir Henry was knighted in 1911, and he has had bestowed upon him an Hon. Mus. Doc. of Manchester University and an Hon. Fellowship at the R.C.M.

Before I commence to attempt to grade the records made by the Queen's Hall Orchestra, I have a few confessions to make. Outside complete sets of records by Melba and Gervase Elwes, my interest in the gramophone is entirely of an orchestral nature. I have had, at some time or other, every record issued under the name of Sir Henry Wood. Furthermore, every decision and opinion which follows is arrived at on using fibre needles only. I think it only fair to state this, in case some of the "steel gang" have different views upon certain recordings. Chamber music I have always left severely alone; not from any sense of distaste, but from a financial point of view. It is quite hard enough to keep oneself up to date in orchestral records nowadays.

Sir Henry Wood's first recordings appeared towards the end of 1915, and they were considered quite an achievement at the time. They gave one the impression of really listening to a large orchestra; there seemed to be a presence of great breadth of tone. This characteristic has been improved upon again lately, and it is my opinion that the Columbia ranks second at the present time in making an orchestra sound natural via the gramophone. First place must undoubtedly go to the Victor Company. The Columbia string tone is superb and easily leads the field. Where the failing lies at present is in the trombone, the tympani, the B flat clarinet (although the recording is excellent, its volume is inclined to be unbalanced). An orchestral *forte*, provided it is

slow or if one chord is sustained, is magnificent; but if the passage is rapid and *forte* at the same time the lower strings and brass are apt to become foggy and indistinct. It seems to me that Columbia excels in music of the older masters, where the score is not too heavy.

GRADE 1.

- **Lohengrin*, Introduction, Act 3.
- **Prelude in C sharp minor*.
- **Ride of the Valkyries*.
- Le Chasseur Maudit*.
- Judex (Mors et Vita)*.
- Cavalleria Intermezzo*.
- Eroica Symphony*, first, third, and fourth movements.
- A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*.
- Pierrot of the Minute*.
- Danzas Fantasticas*.
- Fingal's Cave*.
- Pathétique Symphony*.
- Dance Rhapsody*.
- Tambourin*.
- Gavotte (Bach)*.
- Rondino (Beethoven)*.
- Aubades*.
- Symphony (César Franck)*.
- **Tannhäuser (Venusberg Music)*.
- Flying Dutchman Overture*.

GRADE 2.

- **Tannhäuser Grand March*.
- Coriolan Overture*.
- Hungarian Dances*.
- Till's Merry Pranks*.
- Granados' Spanish Dances*.
- Catalonia*.
- Funeral March of a Marionette*.
- Ave Maria (Arcadelt)*.
- Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1*.
- A Night on the Bare Mountain*.
- William Tell Overture*.
- Eroica Symphony Funeral March*.

GRADE 3.

- Shepherd's Hey*.
- Symphony No. 4, Scherzo (Tchaikovsky)*.
- Tristan (Prelude and Liebestod)*.
- Irish Tune from County Derry*.
- Götterdämmerung (Rhine Maiden's Scene)*.
- Shepherd Fennel's Dance*.
- Fantasia of Sea Songs*.
- Faust Ballet Music*.
- Violin Concerto (Elgar)*.
- Raff's Cavatina*.
- Dance Macabre*.
- Clog Dance*.
- Meistersinger (Dance of Apprentices)*.
- L'Apprenti Sorcier*.
- Rienzi Overture*.

Carmen Suite.
Leonore Overture.
Minuet from Septette.
Le Cid Ballet Music.
Unfinished Symphony (Schubert).
Slavonic Dances.
Semiramide Overture.
Fra Diavolo Overture.
Prophet Coronation March.
Largo.
Rheingold (Entrance of Gods).

GRADE 4.

Träume (Wagner).
Three Blind Mice.
Capriccio Espagnole.
Tannhäuser Overture.
Cavalleria Selection.

GRADE 5.

Espana Rhapsody.
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.

* Denotes new recording.

As regards new recordings of the earlier titles, I have done my best to get a complete list, but I imagine that there are still a few which have been re-recorded that I haven't heard.

I am not going into any lengthy discussion about the records themselves; they are placed in *any* order in their grades. My own favourites and those I consider the very best are: *The Midsummer Nights Dream Overture* and the first movement of the *Eroica Symphony*. I have put the *Funeral March* from the *Eroica* in grade 2 not from the point of re-

cording, but of cutting; it is an absolute sacrilege of a great movement. The *Pathétique* rather shows up the point I have mentioned above; most of the loud quick passages of the first movement are indistinct. However, Sir Henry gives a beautiful reading of the score, and the cutting is done with advantage in this case. The tympani are absent at the end of the third movement. *The Flying Dutchman Overture*, although only taking up one side, as against the double on H.M.V., gives a much better idea of the work as a whole; the tone is good throughout.

I can recommend all the records in grade 2, but I should like to see all the titles in the lower grades re-recorded, and in some cases less severely cut. The *Tannhäuser Overture* is an abomination; Sir Henry uses a most unnecessarily slow tempo at the beginning of this work, and the whole of the first side is taken up with a cut version of the *Pilgrim's Chorus* with a little of the *Venusberg* music at the end. The revels then last for a minute and a half on the second side, and the work ends with the *Pilgrim's Chorus*; only half the second side is filled up. The complete recorded version takes eight minutes altogether, an ordinary concert performance should take at least eighteen.

We people who have been educated up to listening to Franck, Brahms, and Wagner, via the gramophone, must not forget that for new recruits these lesser works are essential to begin upon. Therefore I appeal to the various companies to re-record their earlier orchestral music, which, as a rule, contains the titles likely to interest a novice in the art, as well as being a new pleasure for most of us old stagers.



Fibreurs.

It is evident from correspondence received that an increasing number of our readers are becoming converts to the wooden or fibre needles. The Xylopin makes converts because it is the same shape as a steel needle and requires neither a cutter nor a sound-box specially cut for fibres. The fibres, on the other hand, make converts because, especially in their semi-permanent and doped forms, they last much longer than hitherto. But it is equally evident that both wooden and fibre needles do not always receive fair trial from beginners. To save correspondence may we say that we have proof of what *can* be done—in the matter of endurance—by Xylopin or fibre needles; and that if anyone finds the result not so satisfactory as he has been led to expect, he should first remove the notes that are in his own record, or see that the needle starts with a good point, or that the sound-box is not too heavy and the alignment not too un-Wilsonian?

Vocalions.

The formation of a new company to take over the Vocalion, Aco, and World records in this country coincides with the news that the Vocalion records in America have been taken over by the Brunswick Company. We do not as a rule pay much attention to these commercial transactions, and, for instance, merely record with regret the disappearance of such makes of gramophone as the Kestraphone, the Bestone, and the Bandmaster: but this news of the Vocalion Company ends a period of ill-disguised anxiety, and we hope that there is a great future for the records, which have perhaps appealed more to readers of this review than to the public in general, and that under judicious guidance there is an equally great future for the World records. Meanwhile, we repeat our counsel to everyone to lay in a good stock of Vocalion celebrities at the remarkable prices of the present catalogue.

A GRAMOPHONIST'S GUIDE

By PERCY A. SCHOLES

VII. Strauss's Orchestral Tone Poem "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks," as played by the Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Albert Coates.

[We have the privilege of adding this article to the series contributed to previous issues by Mr. Scholes, which will be incorporated in his forthcoming "Second Book of the Gramophone Record," published by the Oxford University Press.]

IT is usual, and I think also just, to say that of all the Tone Poems of Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* is the best.

To begin with, it is nearly all good music. To follow, it is nearly all excellent characterisation.

If composers *must* write closely planned "programme music" (and I for one am not enormously anxious that they should) this is the kind that they ought to write.

Till gets all the eulogies. Says the American, Daniel Gregory Mason* :

It combines the observation of a Swift with the sympathetic imagination of a Thackeray. Beneath its turbulent surface of fun is a deep sense of pathos, of the fragmentariness and fleetingness of *Till*, for all his pranks ; so that to the sensitive it may easily bring tears as well as smiles. Above all, it has that largeness of vision, rarest of artistic qualities, which not only penetrates from appearance to feeling, but grasps feeling in all its relations, presents a unified picture of life, and purges the emotions as the Greek tragedy aimed to do. All is suffused in beauty. The prologue : "Once upon a time there was a man," and the epilogue : "Thus it happened to Till Eulenspiegel," make a complete cycle of the work, and remove its expression to a philosophic or poetic plane high above mere crude realism. There are doubtless more impressive single passages in later works, but it may be doubted if anything Strauss has ever written is more perfect or more tender than this wittiest of pieces, in which the wit is yet forgotten in the beauty.

Says Ernest Newman† :

In *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894-5) the form is again developed with consummate cleverness ; the eloquence and witty transformatons of the original themes interest us both by their purely musical quality and by the vividness with which they suggest this or that aspect of the hero of the poem. It has been frequently pointed out that Strauss's form always has a peculiar appositeness to his subject. The adventures of *Till Eulenspiegel* are best told in rondo form ; the form of a theme with a series of variations is the one most suited to *Don Quixote* ; and there are similar reasons, rooted in the nature of the scenes or the moods that have to be painted, for the forms of all the other orchestral works from *Macbeth* to the *Symphonia Domestica*. In *Till Eulenspiegel* the thematic development is carried on with an ease and a copiousness of invention that are a constant delight to the musician ; while the whole work glows with good spirits and rings with kindly laughter, Strauss's comedy here sounds a more generally agreeable note than anywhere else, except in parts of *Don Quixote*. After the latter work his comic sense acquires an unpleasantly acid taste ; in *Ein Heldenleben*, for example,

he has lost the art of tolerant laughter, and can only grin and grimace unpleasantly and rather savagely at the follies of mankind. In *Till Eulenspiegel*, in fact, all the components of his nature are still held in an approximate balance. After this, while he deepens notably in some respects, touches some sublime heights of feeling, and sounds some extraordinary depths, the general balance of his work is upset. The impish side of his temperament gets more and more out of his control, and he is increasingly inclined to overcrowd the programmes of his symphonic poems with literary or pictorial ideas that are generally beyond the power of music to express.

Even in *Till* there are, I think, some few dull pages (e.g., those four or five beginning with page 29 in the miniature score, but then these are intended to bring before us a band of learned professors, whose legs *Till* is pulling), but the themes are all good, the treatment is generally subtle and effective, and the orchestration is extraordinarily able. In *Till*, then, as aforesaid, we find Strauss at his best, and it is a satisfaction to be able to see him represented by this particular work in the Gramophone's library.

When Dr. Wüllner, in 1895, was preparing to give the first performance of this work (at a Gürzenich concert in Cologne) he asked the composer of it for an explanation of its "programmatic" basis, and did not get much for his pains. Still, what he did get is worth quoting :

It is impossible for me to furnish a programme to *Eulenspiegel* ; were I to put into words the thoughts which its several incidents suggested to me, they would seldom suffice and might even give rise to offence. Let me leave it, therefore, to my hearers to "crack the hard nut" which the Rogue has provided for them. By way of helping them to a better understanding, it seems sufficient to point out the two *Eulenspiegel* motives :



which in the most manifold disguises, moods and situations pervade the whole up to the catastrophe when, after he has been condemned to death (a descending major seventh—F to G flat), *Till* is strung up to the gibbet. For the rest, let them guess at the musical joke which a Rogue has offered them.

Programme annotators have gone farther than the composer in their attribution of a literary or pictorial

* *Contemporary Composers*, Macmillan, 1918.

† *Richard Strauss*, John Lane, 1908.

sense to various passages in the music. Searching the book of the adventures of the legendary thirteenth century hero-humorist, *Till Eulenspiegel* (who in Queen Elizabeth's days and since has been well enough known in this country as Till Owleglass) the critics have found a number of incidents which can with plausibility be scribbled into the score as explanatory of its various passages. They see as the music proceeds, Till riding through the market place and upsetting the stalls, Till in a monk's habit preaching, Till in love (and unfortunate in it), and Till playing tricks upon the University professors.

One thing they all agree upon (and those of us who heard the music before ever we read anything about it have, I think, all at once felt the same) is that the opening few bars represent a sort of "Here beginneth the story of Till Eulenspiegel—a creature, remember, of human feelings like your own," and the similar bars at the end, a sort of Epilogue "Here endeth the story of Till Eulenspiegel—a rogue if you like, but a human creature like the rest of us."

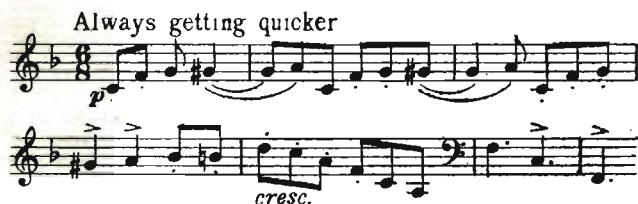
Note that these bars are suffused with a quiet pensiveness; Strauss is in this Tone Poem not merely the humorist; he is the humanist also. That, indeed, is where he scores most decidedly. In *A Hero's Life*, *Don Quixote*, *Don Juan* and other works, he has tried to be clever and has fallen into vulgar commonplace; with Till he is really in sympathy, and his cleverness is sublimated by this.

The two opening themes, expressive plainly of two sides of Till's character, have already been quoted. This is the actual form in which they, at the outset, appear:—

The pensive Till (VIOLINS):



The freakish Till (HORN, with Violin tremolo accompaniment; then HORN again, then OBOES, then CLARINETS, then BASSOONS, VIOLAS and 'CELLOS, working up to FULL ORCHESTRA):



Other important themes, to be well noted, since their treatment makes up a large part of the score, are these:



This, and the passage which grows out of it, say commentators, represent Till's exploit in the market place, his furious riding and upsetting of stalls and alarming of market women.

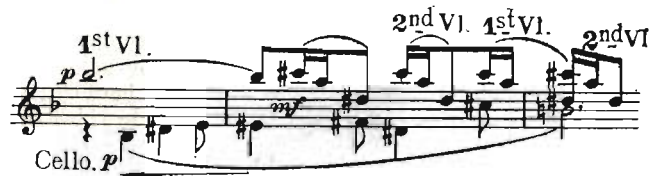


This, and the Haydnish passage which grows out of it, is, for some reason, thought by the commentators to represent the supposed monk Till, preaching his mock-sermon (VIOLAS, BASSOONS and CLARINETS give a dark colouring to the tune).

We now turn the Record and come, it is supposed, to Till in love. Obviously no man's biography is complete without a love passage. Queen Elizabeth, it is said, asked to see Falstaff in love, and got *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as a professed attempt to comply with this demand—which it certainly does not. Strauss has got nearer to meeting our demands in the case of Till. After a passage made out of the first Till *motif*, in which he seems to see the hero as far from comfortable under the first rain of Cupid's darts, he takes this *motif*, gives it a flowing three-to-a-beat rhythm, and sets the sufferer at ease:



Or he takes that same first Till theme and out of it fashions repeated ardent protestations, whilst, underneath, the second Till theme, with a yearning leap introduced into it, runs in combination (rather difficult to catch, in this Record, at the speed at which it passes).



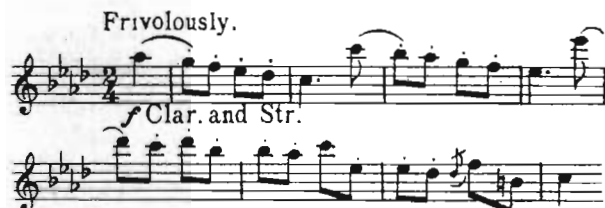
Or he re-shapes this latter theme again, and marks it *love-glowing* or *liebeglühend* (VIOLIN, FLUTE and CLARINET):



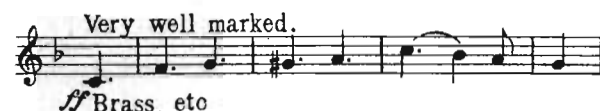
Soon we reach the incident of the fooling of the dry old professors, above mentioned (represented by gruff BASSOONS, DOUBLE BASSOON and BAS CLARINET):



Then he jauntily leaves these men of learning, whistling as he does so (just after the change of Record) a brief snatch of a gay street tune.



A dignified transformation of the second Till motif has been spoken of as "Till at the height of his glory":



At last (just as we turn the Record) comes retribution. Till is arrested (DRUMS); he is led before the judge (HORNS and TROMBONES with DRUMS); he repeatedly protests his innocence and pleads for life (SMALL CLARINET); the judges cut him short ponderously every time; the sentence is pronounced; Till is hanged (drop of a seventh in BRASS, BASSOONS, and DOUBLE BASSOON followed by the departing of the soul in a Flute trill).

Then follows the touching Epilogue already mentioned, and all ends.

Till Eulenspiegel is scored for a large orchestra: 3 Flutes and Piccolo, 3 Oboes and Cor Anglais, Small Clarinet, 2 normal Clarinets and Bass Clarinet, 3 Bassoons and Double Bassoon, 4 Horns (and another 4 *ad lib*), 3 Trumpets (and another 3 *ad lib*), 3 Trombones, Bass Tuba, Kettledrums, Triangle, Cymbals, Big Drum, Small Drum, a big Rattle, 16 each of First and Second Violins, 12 each of Violas and Cellos, and 8 Double Bases.

I will not swear that absolutely all these instruments in just these proportions were present in the recording rooms when this reproduction was made, but it is a faithful and effective reproduction, nevertheless, and, indeed, I recommend it as one of the most enjoyable orchestral records at present available.

A word further about the form of the piece. E.N., above, calls it a Rondo, and the full title is: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche; nach alter Schelmenweise—in Rondeauforn; i.e., Till Eulenspiegel's*

Merry Pranks; after the old Rogue-manner—in Rondo form. A Rondo, properly speaking, is a composition in which some main musical theme keeps returning. Here, necessarily the two Till motifs are again and again woven into the fabric, but that does not constitute Rondo Form, in the usual sense of the words, and the description the composer has given it should not mislead listeners into expecting something they will not hear.

A comment upon the almost unchanged pitch of the recurring motif may be quoted. It occurs in the volume of Daniel Gregory Mason already cited.

Why is it that we so seldom hear the four tones of Till Eulenspiegel's main theme on any other degrees of the scale than A, F, B, C? Why is it that, in spite of the constant movement from key to key in the music, this theme is hardly ever carried also into the new key? Why does Strauss so insist on this A, F, B, C, not only when the music is in F major, but when, as at Till's anger, it is in D minor, when, as in the procession of the burghers, it is in A minor, and when, just before the return of the main theme, it is in C major? Why always A, F, B, C, whatever the key? Is it not because Till, half-witted, perverse, self-imprisoned, is not subject to social influences, and remains unplastically himself, whatever his environment? To transpose a theme into the key prevailing at the moment is to make order—but Till represents disorder. . . . Such at least is the ingenious explanation of a woman who understands character as well as Strauss understands keys.

That, perhaps, is a little fanciful; at all events, the device suggested, to be effective, would have to depend upon a far more widespread "sense of absolute pitch" than exists amongst our public.

Now something further as to the literary programme of this piece. In my judgment the sequence of ideas which has been suggested above by Strauss, his commentators and myself is as much as most listeners can make use of, but it is fair to admit that some time after the first performance of the piece the composer decided upon a fuller revelation than he had previously been willing to give. It is quoted in Niecks' *Programme Music* (Novello, 1906), as compiled from a series of pencil marks entered in a score given by Strauss to the Munich critic and composer, Wilhelm Mauke:

(1) Prologue. "Once upon a time there was a rogue."
(2) Of the name of "Till Eulenspiegel." (3) That was a mischievous sprite. (4) Away for new pranks. (5) Wait! you hypocrite! (6) Hop on horseback through the midst of market women! (7) With seven-league boots he makes off. (8) Hidden in a mouse-hole. (9) Disguised as a pastor he overflows with unction and morality. (10) But the rogue peeps out from the great toe. (11) Before the end, however, a secret horror takes hold of him on account of the mockery of religion. (12) Till as cavalier exchanging civilities with pretty girls. (13) With one of them he has really fallen in love. (14) He proposes to her. (15) A polite refusal is nevertheless a refusal. (16) [Turns away in a rage.]* (17) Swears to take vengeance on the whole human race. (18) Philistine motive. (19) After proposing to the Philistines a couple of monstrous theses, he abandons the dumbfounded ones to their fate. (20) Great grimace from afar. (21) Till's

Gassenhauer (vulgar street song). (22) [Watched by catch-poles, and collared by the bailiff.]* (23) The judgment. (24) He whistles to himself with indifference. (25) Up the ladder! There he is swinging, his breath has gone out, a last quiver. All that is mortal of Till is ended. (26) [Epilogue. What is immortal, his humour, remains.]*

To this, says Niecks, has to be added only one remark, namely that the Straussite commentators hold that the composer had more in his mind than he confessed in the above, that he aimed at something higher than the mere illustration of a rogue's pranks.

This, it will be observed, is a mere amplification of what has already been given. Some enthusiastic readers may care to busy themselves in finding all the passages alluded to. I offer no prize!

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* I do not understand the force of the square brackets here, but reproduce them as Niecks gives them.

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BAND RECORDS OF 1924

By W. A. CHISLETT

BRASS BAND RECORDS.

PRIDE of place among the records issued in 1924 must be given to the various renderings of *On the Cornish Coast*, the test piece at the last Crystal Palace contest. This has been recorded for the Regal Company by the St. Hilda Colliery Band and the Australian Newcastle Steel Works Band, who were first and third prize winners respectively; for the Winner, by Black Dyke Band, who were second prize winners; and for the Zonophone, by the Horwich R.M.I. Band, who were, I believe, unplaced. Taking into account both playing and recording, first place must be given to the version by the St. Hilda Colliery Band (Regal, Nos. G.8252-3), which is as it should be. This is less cut than the others, occupying three sides and is characterised by an excellent balance of tone throughout. The basses and euphoniums, while not always perfect, are less muffled and woolly than on other records, and the "middle" of the band is very well recorded. The interpretation is quite individual and I found it very attractive until I had got heartily sick of the music itself by playing it so often in an attempt to give a balanced opinion. It is not music that wears very well. The odd side contains a trombone solo, *Favorita*, which, in spite of clever playing, I found very dull and in which the balance between solo instrument and band is not well maintained.

For the benefit of those who want a one record version I would recommend the one by the Horwich R.M.I. Band (Zono. 4076). It is both well played and recorded; and what an artist their soprano player is! The Australian Band record (Regal, No. G.8254) is rather muffled in tone throughout, while that by the Black Dyke Band (Winner, No. 4076) is good enough so far as the first side is concerned, but, whether it is the fault of the playing or recording I don't know, the second side is not very clearly defined and, moreover, is terribly sharp in places.

I had anticipated quite an interesting time comparing the various records made by the Australian Band, who, in addition to the one already mentioned, have recorded several each for the Aco, Beltona, and Imperial Companies. After careful listening I have come to the conclusion that the records issued by the two first-named companies are made from the same matrices! I listened minutely to records of the same title issued by both and could not find the slightest difference and as the surfaces are good in both cases I must bracket them together. The

best is *Coriolanus* (Aco. G.15456 or Beltona 548), which is well played, except that some of the octaves at the commencement are a trifle out of tune, and splendidly recorded. This piece was the test at the Crystal Palace contest a year or two ago and has already been recorded by other bands, but I have had no opportunity of comparing the various versions. Speaking from memory, I should say that this record will bear comparison with any of those previously issued. This version includes a drum part which, of course, is not allowed at a contest. Another good record for those who like their Wagner mutilated is *Eight Minutes with Richard Wagner* (Aco. F.33059 or Beltona 5001), although in this one of the cornets is a trifle flat in places. *Zelda Caprice* (Aco. F.33058 or Beltona 5000) is a capital cornet solo; on the other side is a *Fantasia on D'ye ken John Peel*, in which the choruses are sung with a very pronounced Australian accent. I regret that only one Imperial issue of this band was available for review, and as it bore the title *Torch Dance No. 3, Three Dances from Henry VIII.* (German), I put it on my machine with some trepidation. The opening seemed vaguely familiar, but not a bit like Sir Edward German, and I eventually concluded that the record must be wrongly labelled.* What the correct title is I do not know, but as the piece consists of snippets from the wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn and from the latter's *Spring Song*, interspersed with some comic byplay by the euphonium, trombone, and cornet, perhaps the title is "The Bandmaster's Wedding." At any rate, after hearing the record one can well be excused for coming to the conclusion that he is not present in his usual capacity!

While on the subject of weddings a descriptive piece, *A Rural Wedding*, played by the Horwich R.M.I. Band (Zono. 2474) is an excellent bit of recording and might quite well be added to the Editor's list of funny records. Another descriptive piece, *A Sailor's Life* (Zono. 2452), is not very successful, the voices being very indistinct and sounding a terribly long way off.

Good records of a religious character include a couple of hymns by Besses o' th' Barn Band (Regal G.8250) and *Eventide Hymn* and the *Amen Chorus* from *The Messiah* (Zono. 2462). The beautiful effect of the semi-fugal part of the *Amen Chorus* brought to my mind once hearing the *Fugue* from

*It was! But the misleading label has now been withdrawn and a correct one substituted.—Ed.

Bach's great *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor* played by one of our finest brass bands (this has been recorded and, I understand, is only awaiting a companion piece for the other side before being issued). Why is not more of this kind of music arranged for brass? I know of no music more suitable (if well arranged) than some of the organ fugues of Bach and Rheinberger.

Foden's Motor Works Band have made a couple of first-rate records for the Regal Company. No. G.8105, *Idyll*, and *The Titlarks* and No. G.8134, *Lorely* and *Fearless March*. It must be confessed that the march is rather commonplace, Mr. Ord Hume having done much better than this.

The best Winner record of the year is the Overture to Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* (3982) played by the Pontypool Band. This music sounds much better played by brass than anyone who knows it would imagine, and the record is all the more valuable because it is, I believe, unobtainable in any other form. I cannot recommend the same band's record of *Recollections of Verdi* (3983). It is not a success.

To select the best record of the year is a very difficult task, but anyone who buys the following will not go far wrong, although I have yet to find a record to beat *The Viking*, played by Black Dyke Band (Regal G.8070-1), which is a splendid record of a very fine piece of music and which was issued towards the end of 1923.

On the Cornish Coast, Regal G.8252-3 or Zono 2484, and *Lorely*, Regal G.8134.

MILITARY BAND RECORDS.

Perhaps the most interesting series of records issued during 1924 were those of Holst's second suite in F, versions of which are available on H.M.V., Vocalion, and Velvet Face records, played by the bands of the Coldstream Guards, Life Guards, and Scots Guards respectively. While all are good I am glad to be able to say that the best is also the cheapest (Voc. K.05082). As the whole four movements have been crammed on to the two sides of a 12in. disc a good deal of the interesting development has necessarily been omitted and the record is confined to little more than a plain statement of the various themes. The playing and recording are superb and the interpretation is beautifully elastic and free. Good as the other records are, I thought the interpretation of the Coldstream Guards (H.M.V., C.1165-6) a shade stiff and wooden and that of the Scots Guards (V.F. 1086-7) a little too deliberate on the whole, though, in fairness, I must say that this becomes a virtue in the second movement; I like their playing of this better than either of the others. The recording is splendid in all cases and there is not the suspicion of a blast from start to finish. The odd side of the H.M.V. set of records is taken up by an arrangement of Wagner's *Homage March*,

which is interesting mainly because of the instrumentation.

There have been the usual number of selections from Gilbert and Sullivan's operas during the year and of these I can unreservedly recommend the whole of the Parlophone series, played by the Life Guards Band (Nos. E.10095-8) which are on 12in. discs, and the whole of the Beltona series played by the London Military Band (Nos. 429-432) which are on 10in. discs. The Columbia record of *The Sorcerer* (No. 962) is not quite up to the usual standard of the Grenadier Guards, though good; and of the two records of *Utopia, Ltd.*, I prefer the Columbia version (No. 964) to the H.M.V. (No. C.1148), though both are so good as to make one regret the duplication.

The most interesting issue by the Columbia Company for a long time is an arrangement of Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, played by the Italian Navy Band. This is not an unqualified success, as it is a little muffled in tone throughout and possesses a roughness here and there which will in time develop into full-blooded blasts, I fear. It is very interesting, however, as it is recorded by a band of 80 performers, and I hope the sale will be such as to encourage further experiments in recording with larger bands. I am credibly informed that our Guards bands play for the various companies with 26 performers and even less, which accounts for the records not having the depth of tone that one associates with a military band at full strength. That larger bands can be recorded successfully is amply proved by some of the old Fonotipia records, and the new Clifphone records played by Vessella's Italian Band, in which the roundness and depth of tone is amazing. I have yet to hear a record by Vessella's Band which is other than first class, but of a good lot the two best are, I think, *Semiramide Overture* (No. 25014), in which the delicate gradations of tone and the "filigree" work of the clarinets are beautiful, and *The Dance of the Hours* from *La Gioconda* (No. 25012), the graceful melodies of which are caressingly played.

The pick of the Coldstream Guards records are Lalo's *Norwegian Rhapsody* (H.M.V., C.1154) and the ballet music from *William Tell* (C.1145), which are good records of two very diverse types of music. I cannot, however, find anything to say in praise of Liszt's *Les Preludes* (C.1129). I do not like either the playing or the recording, and the music is utterly unsuitable for a military band. I cannot imagine anyone who has heard this beautiful music played by a competent orchestra buying this record. In a lesser degree I miss the string tone in Grainger's *Woodland Pictures* (C.1144), though in this case the playing and recording are both adequate. During the year the excellent Band of the Royal Air Force have made their debut with the H.M.V. Company. One of their first issues is an arrangement of one of

Glazounov's *Noveletten* (B.1843) which is very welcome. This is a very successful record, and I am hoping for more good things from them in the future.

The Edison Bell people, with commendable enterprise, have broken new ground by giving us *La Boutique Fantasque* (V.F.601) and *Caucasian Sketches* (V.F. 1107-8), both played by the Scots Guards. Now that the H.M.V. orchestral version of *La Boutique Fantasque* has been withdrawn I believe that this is the only record available for the gramophone, which makes it doubly valuable; playing and recording are both excellent as they are also in the *Caucasian Sketches*. M. Ippolitof-Ivanov's music is not as well known as it deserves to be. He has written some charming music of the lighter type and some very interesting chamber music; and these sketches should be as popular as Luigini's ballet suites. Of the four numbers composing the suite, I like the first two the best, and the second, *In the Village Street*, shows the different tone colours of the various reed instruments as well as any record I know, and also the difference in tone between the lower and middle registers of the clarinet. The first two numbers of the *Merchant of Venice Suite* (V.F. 1100) are adequately recorded, but the music is very dull, though I found the peculiar organ-like quality of tone produced by the different reed instruments playing in unison in *Portia* rather attractive. The recent Winner records are disappointing; *La Princesse* (4009) and *La Source Suite* (4010), both played by the Wembley Exhibition Band, are only mediocre. They have, however, the distinction of having issued the very worst record of the year in *Bells Across the Meadows* (4046). My limited vocabulary does not suffice to describe the "music" at all adequately, unless it is enough to say that it possesses such an elusive quality as to elude completely even the Scots Guards Band—not even the recording is good.

After my recent experience with an Imperial Brass Band record, it is a pleasure to be able to say that Anderson's Military Band is a very competent organisation, and has made some very good records recently. The two I like best are *Tancredi Overture* (1299) and Friedemann's *Slavonic Rhapsody* (1289), both of which are distinctly good and wonderful value at 2s. each. I am sorry, however, that they have deemed it necessary to grind out yet another version of *In a Persian Market* (1312). The best I can say about it is that the recording and playing are, at any rate, as good as it deserves. The other side is equally monotonous.

Apart from the Sullivan selections previously referred to, the best Beltona record of the year is the popular *1812 Overture*, played by the Scots Guards Band (5012). The balance of tone throughout is good and the recording of the deeper-toned instruments such as the trombone and bassoon is

particularly good, while the whole record possesses a ring which military band records should have, but so often have not. The London Military Band's playing of *Raymond Overture* (433) is more workmanlike than inspired.

The Life Guards Band have made some really excellent records for the Vocalion Company; they are a delight, not only because of the good playing and recording, but also because they have chosen some less hackneyed music. In addition to the Holst suite already dealt with there is a first-class record of Vaughan-Williams's *Folk Song Suite* (K.05086) which must be placed in the very front rank at once. The brilliant *Carnaval Romain Overture* (K.05012) leaves nothing to be desired either in recording or playing, and yet to me it is not quite satisfying. The only explanation I can offer is that I know it so well that I cannot get accustomed to the lack of string tone. As it occupies both sides of a 12in. disc as against one in the orchestral versions, it must rank for the present as the standard version, and to all who are not familiar with it as an orchestral piece I can cordially recommend it. On the lighter side we have Messenger's charming suite, *Les Deux Pigeons* (K.05107 and K.05114), played and recorded adequately, though I must confess that I think the "Scène et danse des deux pigeons" is rather heavily treated, and that I prefer the recent Actuelle record of this movement, played by the Garde Republicaine Band. There is also the very best record of *The Parade of the Tin Soldiers* (X.9450) I have heard, the muted cornets are delightful. I regret I have not had an opportunity of hearing the H.M.V. and Vocalion records of Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Capriccio Espagnol* side by side, and so I refrain from commenting on either, and the only Aco record I have heard is a selection from *Rigoletto* (G.15510), which is very ordinary.

The recent Regal issues have not been as good as usual. The best of a very mediocre lot being selections from *The Geisha* (8189) and *La Bohème* (G.8157) respectively and both played by the Silver Stars Band.

In conclusion, out of a large number of really good records I would especially recommend the following as being not only good records, but also good music:

Vaughan-Williams's *Folk Song Suite* (Voc. K.05086), *The Dance of the Hours* (Brunswick, 25012), Lalo's *Norwegian Rhapsody* (H.M.V., C.1154), and *La Boutique Fantasque* (V.F. 601).

Note.—I wish to express my thanks to Mr. W. J. Waller, of Rochdale Road, Halifax, for lending me, from his stock, a large number of records to supplement those available for review, and to Messrs. The Murdoch Trading Co., who, on hearing that the selection sent to me by the London Office did not include any Beltonas, promptly sent me those I asked for.

W. A. CHISLETT.

DECEMBER COMPETITIONS

A SCRUTINY of the lists of *Twelve Best Military Band Records* sent in by competitors seems to indicate that the collectors of this kind of record are more loud-voiced than numerous. They are constantly telling us that sufficient attention is not given in THE GRAMOPHONE to band records, and in deference to them articles on the subject are to be found elsewhere in this number. But one competitor—Mr. D. C. Robinson, the winner of the September competition—writes: "I have very few band records (fifteen in all) . . . and I think the above twelve, all more or less recommended in THE GRAMOPHONE, are the pick of them." Yet eight out of his twelve are in the winning dozen; so that the advice given in these columns cannot be so inadequate as critics have thought.

The following are, by popular vote, the winning dozen:—

1. *1812 Overture* (Tchaikovsky), H.M. Grenadier Guards; Col. 576 (4s. 6d.).
2. *The Beggar's Opera Selections* (Gay-Austin), H.M. Grenadier Guards; Col. 927 (4s. 6d.).
3. *Suite for Military Band in F* (Holst), H.M. Life Guards; Voc. K.05082 (4s. 6d.).
4. *Folk-Song Suite for Military Band*, H.M. Life Guards; Voc. K.05086 (4s. 6d.).
5. *Maximilian Robespierre Overture* (Litolff), National Military Band; Col. 928 (4s. 6d.).
6. *Rosamunde Overture* (Schubert), H.M. Coldstream Guards; H.M.V. C.1109 (4s. 6d.).
7. *Capriccio Espagnol* (Rimsky-Korsakov), H.M. Life Guards; Voc. K.05098 (4s. 6d.).
8. *The Shoe Ballet Music* (J. Ansell), H.M. Coldstream Guards; H.M.V. C.1147 (4s. 6d.).
9. *W. H. Squire's Popular Songs* (selection), H.M. Grenadier Guards; Col. 939 (4s. 6d.).
10. *Egmont Overture* (Beethoven), Royal Italian Marines (*sic*): Col. 960 (4s. 6d.).
11. *Tannhäuser Overture* (Wagner), H.M. Life Guards; Voc. K.05050 (4s. 6d.).
12. *Tancredi Overture* (Rossini) and *Ruy Blas Overture* (Mendelssohn), H.M. Grenadier Guards; Col. 513 (4s. 6d.).

The first five of the above were very close to each other in the voting. Close after the last came the *Ballet Egyptien* (Luigini) on Col. 625 and 626; the *Burial of Cock Robin* (Williams) and *Parade of the Tin Soldiers* (Jessel) on Col. 516; *Les Cloches de Corneville* (selection) (Planquette, arr. Godfrey) on Voc. K.05099; and the *Prince Igor Ballet Music* (Borodin) on V.F. 1063 and 1064. It is significant of the limitations of competitors' choices that not a

single Parlophone record was included and only one Brunswick; and of the cheaper records only Zonophones scored more than a very few points.

Mr. S. HARFORD, Glenelg, Leas Road, Budleigh Salterton, S. Devon, follows up his recent success in the Gilbert and Sullivan competition by winning again, this time with ten out of the twelve choices. He is closely pursued by Mr. Robert W. Shields, Mr. H. F. Wiggins, and Mr. D. C. Robinson, who got eight each; and among others who sent in good lists must be mentioned Mr. B. W. Scowby, Mr. M. Nathans, Mr. J. R. Potts, Mr. T. A. Mowl, and Mr. J. C. W. Chapman. The last-named showed more wisdom and variety of choice perhaps than the others.

The *Epigramophone Competition* was frankly a failure. You might suppose quite a large number of our readers would be anxious to enshrine some quip or sneer or anecdote about the gramophone in a four-line epigram. But there were only a few entries, and among them several which showed a queer ignorance of the making of epigrams. The two best were these:—

When at a concert people shout "Encore!"
I get the needle, thinking "What a bore!"
But when my audience wants a double measure
I get the needle, thinking it a pleasure!
(H. E. NICHOL, Northwood, The Park, Hull).

The youthful lover greatly doth rejoice
To hear the accents of his ladye's voice;
But when his hair is grey, and stiff his limb,
"His Master's Voice" is good enough for him.
(H. H. ENSOR, 12, Heathurst Road, Sanderstead).

The Editor, whose decision is final, gives the prize (15s. worth of records) to the former, but would have given it to Mr. Ensor if he had put "mistress's" instead of "ladye's."

One of the staff, by the way, though not allowed to compete, produced the following:—

When "Indicator" in his silent house
Tested the new sound-box, his wakened spouse
Wrathfully creeping down the stairs to hear
Gave him another sound-box—on the ear.

The *Humane Mikado Competition* produced a large crop of verses in approximately the metre of this rollicking song from *The Mikado*, but, as was to be feared, though ingenious punishments for gramomaniacs were devised by many competitors, few were able to maintain a steady brilliance through twenty intricate lines. Mr. George Drummond, for instance, had a beautiful idea:—

Of angle and tracking the glib exponent
Will regret he is still alive
When he spends sad days
In a trackless maze
At an angle of forty-five;

and if there were space it would be amusing to quote

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Albert Coates.
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Op. 125 (Beethoven).
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Albert Coates.
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Felix Weingartner.
L1489-1492 { Symphonie Pathétique (Tchai-
kovski).
New Queen's Hall Orchestra, Conducted by
Sir Henry J. Wood.
L1523-1527 { Symphony, "From the New
World," Op. 95/5 (Dvorak).
Hallé Orchestra, Conducted by Hamilton Harty.
L1528, 1499, { The Planets Suite (Gustav
1543, 1459, { Holst) — "Mars," "Venus,"
1532, 1509, { "Mercury," "Jupiter,"
1542 { "Saturn," "Uranus," "Nep-
tune".
London Symphony Orchestra, Conducted
by Gustav Holst.

VOCALION.

- A0162, 0166, { Quintet, Op. 44 (Schumann).
0171, 0173 { London String Quartet and
Ethel Hobday.
D02110 { Quartet, Op. 51, No. 2—
D02137 { First and Second movements
and Third and Fourth move-
ments (Brahms).
London String Quartet.
D02013 { Quartet in D (Mozart).
D02014 { London String Quartet.
D02044 { Trio, Op. 49 (Mendelssohn).
D02054 { Albert Sammons, Warwick
Evans, and Ethel Hobday.

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extracts from the contributions of H. E. Nichol, W. L. Probst, J. E. Potts, and John W. Talbot, all of whom are to be commended for their efforts.

The three best were as follows:—A. H. Clark, George H. Bailey, Leslie C. Rae.

The Editor awards the album of *Ruddigore* (H.M.V.) to MR. A. H. CLARK.

The surface-noise and needle fanatics,
The "fibre" and "Glissoline" buyers,
We shall force them to grate
With slate pencil on slate,
Surrounded with amplifiers.

The bore who prates of the mathematics
Of track-alignment, and scorns
The "goose-neck," is nagged
Through tone-arms zig-zagged
And specially crumpled horns.

The anti-mica crank who abuses
The tone of an ord'nary gram.,
Shall pursue his researches
While nine Galli-Curci's
Are played on his own diaphragm.

And what of the cylinder-wallah who chooses
The Edison product to extol?
He will not miss his due;
Him the Devil shall stew
In his bottomless blue amberol.

—A. H. CLARK, 47, Tremaine Road, Anerley, S.E.

The gramomaniac who shrieks for
An angle of forty-five
Shall direct manœuvres
In rooms full of louvres,
Constructed and domed like a hive;

In these he'll play records abraded and twisted,
With tracks he cannot align;
His diaphragm, too
Shall be set all askew,
With the needle at ninety-nine.

The very high-brow who sighs for sonatas,
Whom concertos cannot glut,
Whose chief irritation
Is bad orchestration,
Or the fact that the score's been cut;
His symphonies now shall not be unfinished,
The coda I bestow
Is one of my own
For a saxophone,
With a flattening tremolo.

—GEORGE H. BAILEY, 23, Union Street, Melksham, Wilts.

The gentleman who's incessantly sitting
And playing a gramophone,
And ceaselessly wearing
His records, comparing
Their volume and scratch and tone;
He's tied to a wonderful tone-arm fitting,
An instrument I've designed,
And slides on his back
In a needle track
That has never been aligned.

The sound-box fiend who's always contrasting
His mica etcetera
Is taken politely
And stretched out tightly
And fixed to a stylus bar;

And there he's submitted to tests for blasting
On records picked by me,
Until HIS sound
Is as good all round
As that of an H.M.V.

—LESLIE C. RAE, 37, Highbury New Park, N.



London Office Notes

There is no room for these this month. *Noblesse oblige*. No room even to expatiate on the additions to the office furniture; the *Jussrite* cabinet which holds fifty records in suspended envelopes, and looks very neat and practical beside the elegant *Sesame* cabinet; the *Calloro* motor which is being installed in the Orchestrathone; the new kind of boisterous *Amplifier* (sent round from the Gramophone Exchange), which makes an amazingly loud and yet controlled noise—ideal for dance music in a large room and yet kind to Debussy—a giant with a gentle hand—and it looks like the steering-wheel of a Ford; and last, but assuredly not least, the two Vurtz sound-boxes—one for vocal, one for instrumental records—beautifully finished—a real joy for the office Balmain. We can only thank the givers for their gifts; and also thank Mr. Wilson for having provided a new tone-arm for the Orchestrathone (or Vocarola) which now makes it claim to be the best-aligned instrument in the Kingdom.

The Supplements

Owing to a slight misunderstanding no Art Supplement is included in this number. If things had gone right the portrait of Sir Henry Wood which appeared last month should have accompanied the celebrity article which will be found on another page. But incidentally, may we add that it is always a help when anyone sends us a postcard to ask for the portrait of any particular celebrity to be published in this form?

Talking of postcards, we were asked the other day, what is the circulation of the P.P. Supplement? A hard question to answer. Of the thousands of copies sent out every month what percentage falls into the hands of people who are interested by them, what percentage drops sadly from those hands into the waste paper basket unread? Good sir or madam, when you read these lines, if you have the energy (and a postcard), will you write on it whether or not you read the Player-Piano Supplement; and also who are your favourite gramophone celebrities?

National Gramophonic Society Notes

[All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.]

OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY :—*To aim at achieving for gramophone music what such societies as the Medici have done for the reproduction of the printed book.*

COST OF MEMBERSHIP :—*5s. a year subscription. £3 5s. half-yearly (on March 24th and September 29th) for records, packing and (inland) postage. Twenty-four twelve inch double-sided records will be issued every year (i.e., they cost 5s. each, with 10s. a year for packing and postage. Members abroad or in the Dominions have a separate account for postage).*

The Society is limited to 1,000 members.

The current year began on September 29th, 1924. New members will receive the Debussy and Beethoven quartets already issued until the edition is exhausted, (Debussy's Quartet in G minor, Op. 10, and Beethoven's Quartet in E flat, Op. 74. Six records, played by the Spencer Dyke String Quartet).

As far as is practicable, members will be allowed to buy extra sets or extra single records at 5s. each and postage; but in no circumstances may they sell a N.G.S. record to a non-member for less than 7s. 6d.

A list of works suggested for recording by the Society is issued to members, and the Advisory Committee, which consists of the Editor, the London Editor, Messrs. W. R. Anderson, W. W. Cobbett, Spencer Dyke, and Alec Robertson, is largely influenced in framing the programme for the future by the opinions on this list expressed by members. It must be clearly understood, however, that the Society does not intend to duplicate any works published or in course of preparation by any of the Recording Companies, and that the Advisory Committee uses such information as it can acquire in order to avoid this duplication.

All works are recorded complete. They should be played at the rate of 80 revolutions a minute.

* * *

Reports on the first batch of records continue to come in, all enthusiastic and cheering. "The records have come to hand to-day in perfect condition. My niece, who is a L.R.A.M., says they are splendid. I, who am an ignoramus, say the same. When extremes meet —!" writes a Northampton member. Dr. Mead, one of the earliest supporters of THE GRAMOPHONE, writes in despair from California that every single record arrived broken, but he had patched up the fragments and was revelling in the toc-toc music till another set reaches him. On the other hand Mr. C. B. Hilliard of Johannesburg, received his safely—"they are the most perfect records of perfect quartet playing that I have ever heard," he says—so that news from other distant homes to which the packages were sent is awaited by the staff with a certain trepidation. Although the packing was the same in all cases, several breakages have been reported; and one member, in Dunferm-

line, has had two successive disappointments. But it has been possible to replace all damaged records without delay.

* * *

The Raff and Rubinstein record which Mr. W. W. Cobbett has so generously presented to the first three hundred members of the Society has been despatched, and a spontaneous act of public spirit like this makes one wonder whether there are not others who, enjoying the Beethoven and Debussy records in their own homes, may not feel inclined to buy a second set to present to a local school or hospital or institution where the music would give the finest pleasure to a great number of less lucky people. There are still a few sets left.

* * *

The "List of Recorded Chamber Music" has also been distributed to members. This purports to contain details of all the records of this class at present in the English catalogues, and is up-to-date and at least complete enough for all practical purposes. It is really astonishing what a number of records there are of chamber music—not counting those which have been withdrawn. There are blank pages in the book for additions and comments; and as it will be useful to almost any gramophone owner who cares for chamber music at all, a limited number of copies have been printed for sale to the general readers. Members, of course, can also secure extra copies, if they wish; price 6d. and postage 1d.

* * *

Delays, apparently unavoidable, have occurred with the Cobbett record and with the List of Recorded Chamber Music. But they are eclipsed by the delay which postpones almost from month to month the production of the second quarter's records—the Schönberg Sextet and the Schubert Pianoforte Trio in E (which, by the way, is Op. 100, not 143). They should have been distributed at the beginning of the year; and now it looks as if members would be lucky if they get them before the beginning of March. But at any rate the recording is finished, and it only remains for the Committee to hear the first pressings and for the recording company, if they are passed for publication, to press the edition. We have so much reason to be grateful to the company for the consideration shown to our Society that we must be content to take our turn in the recording room and the factory, and even, if necessary, to give up our turn to some red-hot topicality which has to be rushed through for the next bulletin. It is a good thing that our members are getting impatient for more records; and a still better thing that they are so willing to understand the difficulties which crop up in a new enterprise of this kind.

Analytical Notes and First Reviews

BRAHMS'S FIRST SYMPHONY

COLUMBIA.—L.1596-1600 (five 12in. records in album, 37s. 6d.).—**London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Felix Weingartner: **Symphony No. 1 in C minor**, op. 68 (Brahms).

The appearance of this admirable reproduction of Brahms's first symphony calls up memories of the dear old days when people actually took sides and held fierce and wordy contests as to this composer's "place in the sun." It is not perhaps surprising that in 1876 expectations were high, for here was a man, at the mature age of 43, with already a considerable reputation as a composer, planning a symphony—his first—in days when symphonies were uncommonly scarce. His enemies, when it came out, were urgent in repetition of a witless notion that the work was merely a copy of Beethoven—chiefly on the strength (or weakness) of the resemblance of the main theme of the last movement to the great "Joy" tune in the Ninth, but also, doubtless, because of certain mental traits evidenced in the music. They apparently thought it suspicious that one great man should find that a particular idiom—say some leaping figure, or an effect of syncopation, or some colour-element in harmony—expressed particularly well some side of emotion; and that a later composer should use these idioms—in however transformed and fresh a manner—most surely indicated, to their feeble minds, that he had not originality enough to turn out ideas of his own. Of course, the number of these detractors was small. The great bulk of contemporary opinion has always recognised and gladly received the work of genius.

It was a pity that the perfervid admirers of Brahms also went too far, declaring that this symphony of his began where Beethoven's last left off. So it did, in one sense. All great art—art that is to endure, art that is founded on human feeling, and is compact of keenly-felt emotion expressed with dignity, of beauty and strength and pathos, of all warm and living, sensitive expression—must be in one sure succession, however widely its ways of thought and manner of speech may differ from those of other composers. But Brahms was far too big a man, far too sure of his strength, to need to worry about detractors or the excesses of unwise admirers; his symphony spoke for itself, and amply fulfilled the great expectations of 1876, as it holds its assured place in the affections of half a century later.

I need not say very much about the work from the analytical side, for the Columbia Company has adopted the excellent plan of printing some notes upon the music's constitution and progress on the envelopes of the album in which it is contained. It should be said at once that the recording is in most respects well up to the best standard of the day; in some it appreciably draws a little nearer, I think, to perfection's sacred height—an Everest peak not likely to be reached just yet, maybe, but drawing ever nearer. Only in a few things, such as the occasional weakness of the string bass, and the overpowering of the strings by the wood-wind, are we reminded at all keenly of the gramophone's present limitations; and it must be remembered that Brahms's orchestration (though to the careful listener rarely so "muddy" as it has been declared to be) is not always easy to bring out.

To my mind, the recording of a work such as this, excellent in so many ways as it is, emphasises anew the necessity for constant reconsideration and experiment concerning the constitution, the placing, and the conducting of a recording orchestra; I would mention also the desirability of testing plans (by possible rearrangement of some of the dynamic marks in the score) for securing, under the peculiar conditions and limitations of recording, effects that shall, upon the discs, convey the composer's intentions as accurately as possible. Many little examples of places in which such schemes might be tried come to one's notice on going through these records with the score (Lengnick—G. & T.). The string *pizzicato*, for instance, comes out with a splendid little "punch," but the timpani are still biscuit-boxy—less so than I have heard them, but yet not true to life. Has anyone experimented with special kinds of drums and sticks, in order to secure a more natural sound?

First Movement. *Un poco sostenuto: Allegro.*—The opening bars of the slow introduction contain a theme that colours the succeeding *Allegro*. (In the Columbia notes, by the way, the heading "Un poco sostenuto" is given on all three pages on which this movement is dealt with. This is a little misleading.) The

wood-wind, when heard alone, as on page 7 of the miniature score, just before the slow Introduction passes into the main *Allegro*, is delightful—round and mellow. Soon after the *Allegro* commences, the violins (page 9) in the heights are almost inaudible against the wind—one of those occasions when the paucity of strings in a recording orchestra makes itself acutely felt.

The score or so of bars just before Letter P, by the way, gives a taste of what may without derogation of Brahms's originality be described as the Beethoven flavour in the work. The general cast of the first movement—that of melancholy, or pathos—is given by the slow Introduction, and the mood persists through the succeeding *Allegro*. Indeed, it is never altogether absent, in some form or other, from the next two movements also. Brahms has a lovely taste in allowing the varying shades of musical feeling to follow each other with the maximum of emotional effect, and in sustaining the flow of the music—its argument and interest—meanwhile; so that one feels each mood-transition to be at once refreshing (coming as it does just at the right moment, and never lasting too long) and vital to the continuity of the work—woven into its texture. Therein, of course, lies one of the greatest qualities in any composer.

In this first movement he may be said to attain even a tragic mood, but restrained, reflective pathos (so well conveyed by the descending chromatic harmony he so often uses) is its main keynote. Particularly eloquent is the quietly-expressive *coda*.

Second Movement. *Andante sostenuto.*—The slow movement is a good example of the composer's power of varying his emotional stresses, while maintaining something of the same atmosphere as in the first movement. Strings and oboe respectively set forth the first and second portions of the chief theme. Brahms was fond of tunes founded on the plain *doh, me, soh, doh* chord, and one of these themes will be noted at bar 27, on the violin. After a section a little more involved, and very typical of Brahms's manner of writing for the orchestra, comes a repetition, freshly scored, of the first theme, and a leisurely, gently pathetic *coda*, with a final cadence which, with its flattened sixth of the scale, has become only too well known in vulgarised forms, at the tail of cheap ballads, since the days of its fully expressive use by real composers.

Third Movement. *Un poco allegretto e grazioso.*—In the opening of the *Scherzo* we have German homeliness translated into terms of art-music—and very charmingly interpreted. There is also Brahms's favourite *arpeggio* accompaniment, helping to give the impression of the music's striding easily along. Brahms has a happy knack of "keeping the ball in the air," so to speak; the extension of a melody is one of the means he uses. You hear, on a small scale, how he does it with the theme used here. In the treatment of the second idea of this movement (Letter B, bar 45) you may again, if you care, trace the influence of Beethoven, as well as (in the chromatic descent of the harmony and the feeling of melancholy it conveys) a link with earlier moods in this symphony. The wood-wind is more prominent than the strings in this movement, and is very beautifully used. (The small repetition is not recorded.)

Last Movement. *Adagio; Allegro non troppo ma con brio.*—In the *Finale* the composer brings to bear new powers, and, extending his faculties yet more fully, lengthens and enriches our enjoyment accordingly. The chromatic Introduction, *Adagio*, with its brief moments of unrest, rouses curiosity and works up excitement. One might figure a giant heaving a heavy sigh and striving to throw off a mood of depression. No more beautiful example of Brahms's power of evoking, with serene surety, a new mood at a vital moment, and in a few notes, could be desired than the entry of the horn with its peaceful theme—a true stroke of fine art, in its swaying of the balance of emotion. This horn tune has a familiar sound. When the symphony was produced by the Cambridge University Musical Society, a few months after its first performance in Germany, the striking resemblance of the theme to the Cambridge "quarters" chimes was commented upon. It was an accidental, but a happy, coincidence.

A short hymn-like section on the brass leads to the entrance of the *Allegro*, whose main tune, so like that with which Beethoven brought his last symphony to a close, led to foolish comparison and fallacious deductions as to Brahms's aspirations. The explanation given in the Columbia notes—that, as the work was

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at first planned as a memorial to Schumann, the composer probably meant the tune "to represent the apotheosis of the artist and the glorification of his art" is agreeable, though I do not know if it has a sure foundation. However, that matters little. Brahms was perfectly capable of inventing a hundred equally good tunes, as he has shown us elsewhere. This magnificent theme, with succeeding passages that keep up the feeling of exhilaration, forms a splendid foundation for the movement, which, though fairly complex, carries one along in a tide of powerful rhythms and glorious harmony. In places the heavy wood-wind scoring again drowns the strings; but bating this criticism, the work of conductor and orchestra may be declared to have given us, in these five discs, a living memorial of Brahms that every music-lover will be proud to possess.

K.K.

FRANCESCA DI RIMINI

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.951, 952 (13s.).—Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Albert Coates: **Francesca di Rimini** (Tchaikovsky).

A recording of any orchestral work of Tchaikovsky's always arouses pleasurable anticipations, seldom disappointed, for his scoring seems especially adapted to the gramophone. This issue is no exception, being, indeed, one of the most brilliant successes achieved for a long time. The work itself is an interesting one. The composer wisely abandoned his original scheme of an opera on the story of Francesca da Rimini—for his genius was not operatic though he longed to write a successful work in that form—and cast his music instead in the form of an orchestral fantasia. The passages on which the work is based are to be found in the fifth canto of Dante's "Inferno." We are told that the composer also studied Gustav Doré's drawings of the subject.

The score is prefaced by the following explanatory remarks: "Dante arrives in the second circle of hell. He sees that here the incontinent are punished and their punishment is to be continually tormented by the cruellest winds under a dark and gloomy air." Among these tortured ones he recognises Francesca da Rimini, who tells her story.

Here is Carlyle's translation of the passage from the Fifth Canto chosen by Tchaikovsky:—

"And she said to me: 'There is no greater pain than to recall a happy time in wretchedness; and this thy teacher knows. But if thou hast such desire to learn the first root of our love, I will do like one who weeps and tells.

One day, for pastime, we read of Lancelot, how love constrained him; we were alone and without all suspicion.

Several times that reading urged our eyes to meet, and changed the colour of our faces; but one moment alone it was that overcame us.

When we read how the fond smile was kissed by such a lover, he, who shall never be divided from me, kissed my mouth all trembling: the book, and he who wrote it, was a Galeotto; that day we read in it no farther.'

Whilst the one spirit thus spake, the other wept so, that I fainted with pity, as if I had been dying: and fell, as a dead body falls."

The first section of the work, *andante lugubre*, depicts the horrors of the second circle of hell, the cruel winds which torture the unhappy beings incarcerated there. Horror is a state which music cannot really express for any length of time when divorced from stage action. Gluck's picture of the underworld in the second act of *Orfeo* is, for all its naive simplicity, really much more striking than Tchaikovsky's in spite of the elaborate apparatus of sound at the disposal of the latter. The episode of the meeting of Dante with Francesca follows (*più mosso*) which gives opportunity for some fine, passionate, orchestral writing. Then comes some most exciting music, frenziedly chromatic, in which the winds of hell tear and whistle and shriek. It is a famous section much loved by conductors and amazingly effective. Certainly it loses little in the recording. A short clarinet recitative leads to the beautiful solo, begun by the same instrument, which evidently refers to the fifth canto, the meeting of Paolo and Francesca and their sudden love; this is continued by the strings, further enriched by flute and oboe over an accompaniment of clarinet with strings *pizzicato*. It is treated in other lovely ways until the spectral forms again trouble Francesca—you should see Doré's drawings of them—and the gales howl round her head. She had said Paolo would never be divided from her, so above the din rises the love theme. The work ends in sound and fury! Albert Coates has got every

ounce of effect out of his forces, indeed he cannot have had a dry garment on at the conclusion of the piece! The result is certainly magnificent.

N. P.

SCHEHERAZADE

PARLOPHONE.—E.10227, 10228, 10229, 10230, 10231 (12in., 4s. 6d. each).—The Opera House Orchestra conducted by Ed. Moerike: **Scheherazade** (Rimsky-Korsakov). (Min. score, Belaieff—G. and T.).

This great Russian master of orchestration gives us all sorts of coloured delights in the *Scheherazade Suite*, even though (after the Russian manner, with all the Russian limitation of outlook and weakness in practice) he is little concerned with the development of themes, here or anywhere else in his music. His treatment, of course, suits this particular subject well. His suite is a kind of suggestion, rather than illustration, of certain pages in the *Arabian Nights*. The suite is entitled after the wily wife of Sultan Schahriar, who beguiled him with tales into continually postponing, and at last renouncing, his intention of putting her to death "to-morrow." The composer did not envisage the ballet accompaniment to the music, with which Londoners are fairly familiar. The suite has as poetic basis the story of Sinbad the Sailor, various phases of which are suggested in the four movements.

FIRST MOVEMENT.

The sea and Sinbad's vessel are in view. One can feel here the slow surge and constant motion of the sea. (It is interesting to remember that Rimsky-Korsakov adopted as his first profession the navy).

Part 1.—After a few loud chords, a solo violin improvises, to the harp. Soon comes a tune, on violins and wood-wind, calm, but with a decisive little two-note figure at its tail, the two chords being echoed. The lower strings make an arpeggio background. The first side ends with an interlude of wood-wind chords, to soft plucked string accompaniment. There is a cut from here (page 13, bar 5, of the miniature score) to page 15, bar 2.

Part 2.—A little ingratiating theme, developed from the violin's improvisatory bit at the commencement, starts, with clarinet echoes. Then comes fuller orchestration of the first chief theme of Part 1, the wood-wind taking up the arpeggios, the horns having sustained descending chords, and repeating their little pattern many times. The development is in the orchestral colouring, not in the theme, which cannot be said to grow much. The side ends with clarinet and flute winding downwards, against six solo violins moving in chords in the contrary direction—one of those charming yet simple effects that Rimsky-Korsakov was so skilful in devising.

Part 3.—Clarinet, oboe, and 'cello have little solos, with plucked string background. The solo violin again has the winding, improvising theme, which is answered in snatches by delicate wood-wind. Then comes a period of greater animation—the working up by pattern-repetition of part of the material already heard, wood-wind trills going on continuously. This soon dies down, and a melancholy flute takes up the strain, with clarinet supporting in arpeggios. So the movement comes to its *pianissimo* close.

SECOND MOVEMENT.

Here the composer had in mind the story of the Calender Prince—the king's son who went about as a wandering monk, seeking adventure.

Part 1.—The little extemporisation that opened Part 1 is heard again—linking up the tales, so to speak. (A bar of cadenza is omitted.) The bassoon starts a languid, five-bar-long dance tune, on a drone bass. This is directed to be played capriciously, in a manner resembling the delivery of recitative. It is a little stodgily played here. The tune soon livens up, as it is passed to oboe, and later to strings, with a plucked accompaniment. It is frequently held up while the improvisatory little tune, weaving round a few notes, muses for a moment. After a cut from the end of the top line on page 55 to page 60, we hear a rapid plucking accompaniment on the strings, over which the clarinet plays a free version of the interjectory theme. There is then a considerable cut, to page 76, bar 4, where begins—

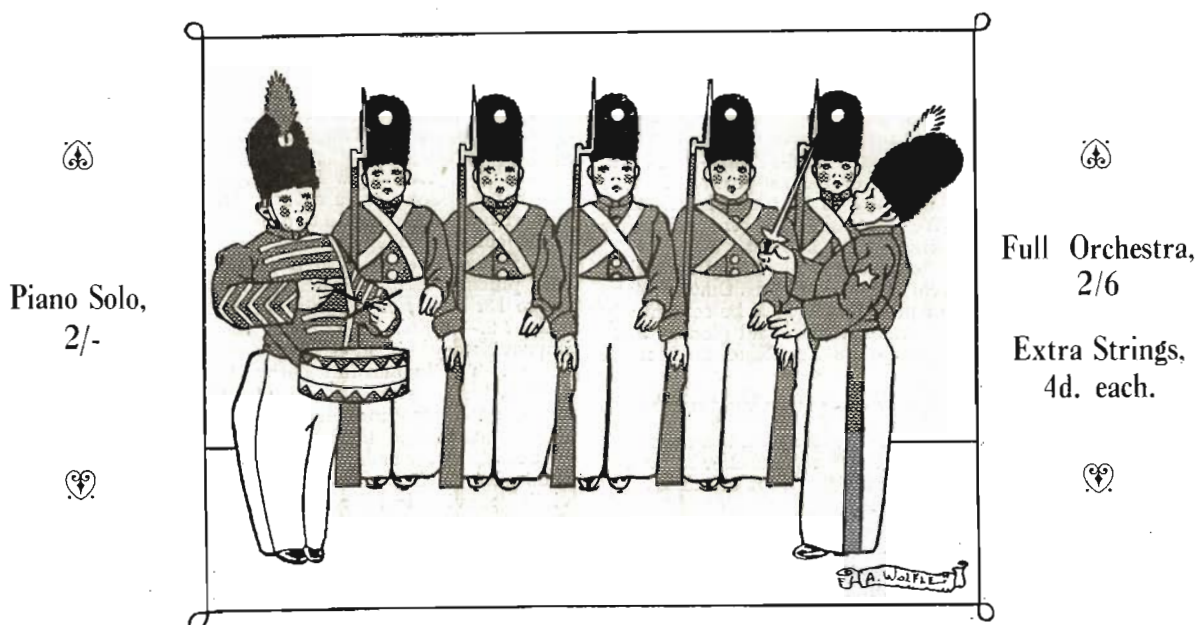
Part 2.—The lively march-like tune, played by trombone and bassoon, is four bars long, and is answered by a wood-wind phrase only three bars long—one of the effective means of variety in rhythm that the composer uses. This theme is broken in upon by the bassoon, with the plucked strings fretting below—the effect we noticed at the end of Part 1, when the clarinet then held the stage with similar matter. Then the dance tune, brisker than at the

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opening of the movement, returns. There is another cut (page 98, bar 4, to last bar of page 102), and after the lower strings have uttered a complaint the movement grows still more vivid in the last few pages.

THIRD MOVEMENT.

This concerns The Young Prince and Princess—a love affair, needless to say.

Part 1.—Here is mildly romantic music, bearing less resemblance to real Eastern music than anything else in the suite. But Rimsky-Korsakov's peculiar brand of Orientalism is well worth savouring, though it be no more authentic than most such decoctions. His chief theme here might have done just as well for any salon piece, without its wood-wind skirls. The strings have the first statement of the tune, the oboe and 'cello the second. (There is then a cut, pages 112 to 117.) Now comes a new clarinet theme, with a drum-tap accompaniment. This lasts for the remainder of the side, after which a cut is made, from page 127, bar 1, to page 133, bar 2.

Part 2.—Again the slow, romantic tune, the solo violin's improvisatory passage breaking in soon. This is followed by a cadenza, over which the wood-wind has its old theme. A more impassioned moment, for full orchestra, follows, and the horn has a very lovely passage. There is a cut from page 143, bar 3, to the last bar of page 146, and a few bars of quicker, lilting music bring the movement to an end.

FOURTH MOVEMENT.

The Festival at Baghdad comes into this, besides the Sea, the Shipwreck, and then the conclusion of the story.

Part 1.—A fierce opening (the first few bars of the suite quickened up). The solo violin again has that cadenza that runs like a thread through the whole texture; but now it is in double and triple notes—chords. After more excitement and a repetition of the cadenza, the violas, with tambourine and horn marking the bars, announce a rhythmic figure that can be taken either as two in a bar or three. This is the liveliest lilt we have yet heard in the suite. The flute announces a jaunty tune that only moves over a few notes. The orchestration becomes increasingly brilliant. Up to now we have felt two beats in the bar. Now, with a snatch of new tune, comes a change to three; and soon we are back at two, with scurrying triplets in strings and wood-wind. A third theme is given out, more gently, by the latter; this flows along lightly, in contrast to those which preceded it.

Part 2.—The various snatches of tune continue, in this and the last part, to be bandied about in the most infectiously exciting rhythms, which the composer agitates still more as we near the end. The opening rhythm of this movement, for example, advances from five notes in each bar to seven, in which form, with its swing of two in the bar, it is pumped out by the flutes and strings, very high up, against the more languid tune, in threes, played by the rest of the orchestra.

Part 3.—Soon, to a skirling accompaniment in the heights, the first theme of the first movement comes, on the brass, dominating the scene with dignity and reminding one a little of the end of the *Tannhäuser Overture*, in this respect—though, of course, widely different in suggestion. The excitement subsides, and after a solemn chord on the horns the wood-wind lets down the tension with the ascending passage we noted at the end of Part 2 in the first movement. The solo violin interjects yet another reminder of its opening improvisation, ending on a very high harmonic. A few more calm chords, and the violin climbs into the empyrean and the music ceases.

Throughout this very taxing music the playing is eminently clear, resourceful, and full-bodied. Perhaps one does not want too many suites made up after the manner of this, but an occasional turn of *Scheherazade* is refreshing exceedingly. K. K.

BEETHOVEN QUARTET

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.953, 954, 955, 956 (26s.).—Virtuoso String Quartet: Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2 (Beethoven).

The Rasoumovsky quartets, of which this one in E minor is the second, belong to Beethoven's "middle" period, a time, as Grove has it, of "extraordinary greatness, full of individuality, character, and humour, but still more full of power and mastery and pregnant strong sense." These words amply serve as a description of the quartet under review. It is difficult to come to grips with the first movement. Certain characteristics are at once noted, such as the unison semi-quaver passages, those in thirds,

the sudden pauses, the ruggedness of the subject-matter, but—what is it all about? I must confess that I do long for a clue to the working of Beethoven's mind in this movement. The playing is rather on the slow side, but the interpretation is most excellent and the recording does justice to the various nuances of the music which sometimes attains a fullness almost orchestral.

The opening of the slow movement is exquisite, the more so in contrast with the music of the preceding one. The composer has contrived a delicately ingenious accompaniment on the first violin for his chief tune when it passes to the second violin; but I do not feel, personally, that this high level of inspiration is maintained throughout the movement. The long scales on the first violin seem rather an intrusion.

The vigorous *scherzo* is wholly delightful and has an especially interesting "trio." In this Beethoven, probably as a compliment to Count Rasoumovsky, uses a Russian folk tune that Moussorgsky, later on, was to make the basis of a great choral number in his opera *Boris Godounov*. The tune is introduced fugally with a counter theme in triplets and, later, in quavers. The order of entry is viola, second violin, 'cello, first violin.

The last movement is all pure joy, containing as it does one of Beethoven's very best tunes. One can almost sense the delight with which the composer fashioned the return to it towards the end of the movement; those abrupt phrases passing from one instrument to another, the sudden leap back! The *coda*, played at break-neck speed, is tremendously exhilarating. To a Russian it must have proved irresistible. Once or twice the 'cello part is weakly recorded and on extreme high notes the first violin is apt to become shrill, but with these reservations the quartet is a pleasure to listen to as sheer beautiful sound, as well as, of course, for its own sake as intelligent music.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the first complete recording of a "Rasoumovsky" quartet.

THE FRANCK SONATA

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.B.785, 788, 786, 787 (12in., 34s.).—Jacques Thibaud and Alfred Cortot: Sonata in A major for violin and piano (César Franck). Allegretto ben moderato, Allegro, Recitative-Fantasia, Allegretto poco mosso.

We have had to wait a long while for a complete and satisfying recording of one of the most played—perhaps overplayed—violin and piano sonatas. After its production in 1886, four years before the composer's death, it was soon recognised by the discerning to be the most considerable work of its type since the Beethoven sonatas, excepting, of course, those of Brahms. It has been said that Franck up in his organ loft at Ste. Clotilde conversed rather with angels than with men. In other words he was the kind of simple saintly man that we call a mystic. This quality, which permeates all his music, is strongly present in the first and third movements of the sonata. Franck was able to blend his special characteristics of chromatic harmony and modulation with classical traditions. He faces both ways. His power of development and his sense of variety are not so great as those of his illustrious predecessors and it is undeniable that a certain monotony invades his longer works. It is especially notable in the *Beatitudes*, his big choral work. But his is not only an extremely individual voice in music, but one that the art could ill spare while, for once, his life perfectly corresponded with his genius.

FIRST MOVEMENT.

The piano sets up a rhythmic swaying over which the violin makes its first entry with that lovely supple tune which is compounded of the very essence of Franck's genius. There are moments in music we all treasure up which never fail to thrill; this is, for me, one of them. His power of modulation is well illustrated by the changing colours of this melody. The piano strikes in with the second tune which is never transferred to the violin—an interesting point of form. It is, in contrast to the dreamy loveliness of the first tune, vigorous and practical. The way it is laid out is very characteristic of the composer. The lovely *coda* promises a melancholy ending, but the violin suddenly transforms the minor into the major key with beautiful effect.

SECOND MOVEMENT.

This is notable for a very brilliant piano part. The music surges along with great impetus. Franck introduced what has been called "cyclic" form into many of his works. Each movement of this sonata is built up on a variant of the first tune of the first movement; sometimes other fragments of tunes heard before are

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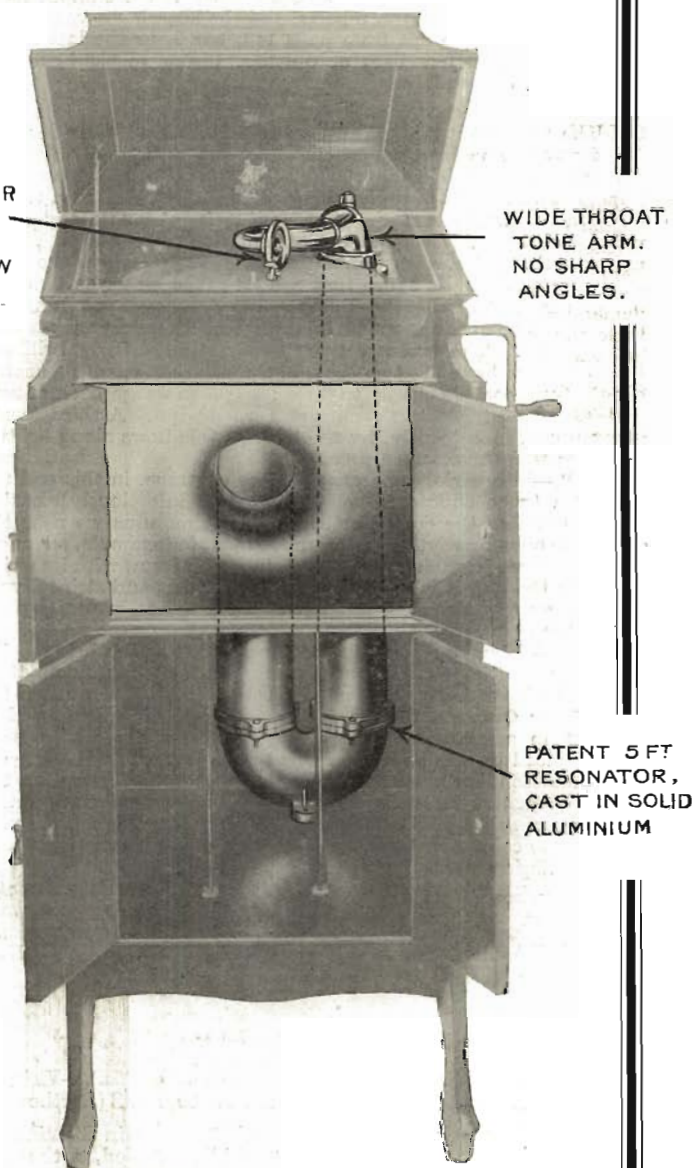
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used—as in the last movement. The practice gives, of course, a decided feeling, not always real, of unity.

THIRD MOVEMENT.

This is on a much higher level of inspiration than the last movement. It is almost like a miniature music drama. The quiet phrases that succeed the broad recitative, like passages for violin at the opening; then the dramatic climax in the middle with the tender *coda* following. It is all of absorbing interest.

FOURTH MOVEMENT.

The variant of the original tune in this movement now sounds like an old French song—a carol perhaps. It is worked in canon with the piano, and in spite of contrast provided by the entrance of a tune heard in the third movement, the effect grows slightly wearisome. The opening is delicious, but the end always seems to me a scramble—as if the players had got a bar out and couldn't get back again. The sonata as a whole is a glorious achievement, and the interpretation it here receives is in every way a worthy one. More than that, a great one. The balance is perfect and the result of two such eminent artists collaborating gives us that other delight, exquisitely finished phrasing. The piano tone is consistently good, the violin tone lovely. There is not a harsh note.

N. P.

MOZART'S B FLAT QUARTET

COLUMBIA.—L. 1606, 1607, and 1608 (12in., 7s. 6d. each).—**Lener String Quartet: Quartet in B flat (K. 458) (Mozart).** (G. and T., ls.).

This Mozart quartet is merely designated, on the records, "Quartet in B flat major." Why is not the K. number added? Without such means of identification the music-lover, unless he happen to know the work, may have to search in growing infatuation among his collection of scores, or to annoy the agents by demanding the score with insufficient particulars. Attention to little things like this would increase our already high respect for the various recording companies.

FIRST MOVEMENT.

Allegro vivace assai (very lively).—The first side gives us the exposition of the first movement's two chief tunes—that which begins with the first note and the second that begins after the long violin trill. The first theme has rather a folk-songish, dance-like air (observe, for instance, its characteristic cadence in the eighth bar). The Exposition is repeated, and on side 2 comes the development of some of the ideas previously set forth—quite brief, but full of delight. The flowing tune first heard soon gives place to the five-note figure, reminding one, in length, of the trills just heard. The change of key to minor is very effective, too. Before long we are back again at the first theme of the movement—the one that skips down in arpeggio. The repetition of the Exposition (called "Recapitulation") is marked to be repeated, but, as is usually the case, this mark is disregarded, and the music runs on to the fairly lengthy *coda*, or tail-piece, which is mainly concerned with the rhythm of the first tune.

SECOND MOVEMENT.

Minuet. Moderato.—Some little sudden bursts of tone characterise the subject first heard, which is richly harmonised, calling up visions of dignified old dances now (must we say?) gone for ever. The trio (middle section) has a daintier lilt, the tune (first violin) being accompanied by crisp movement, six notes to a bar, in the middle strings. Follows the repetition of the first section, as is customary. A beautiful example of two contrasted moods in one movement, that both supplement and enhance each other.

THIRD MOVEMENT.

Adagio (very slow).—Meditative, deeply expressive—romantic, in the finest sense. (What a pity it is to make those distinctions, too commonly and too hardly drawn, between "classical" and "romantic" music—by which, I am persuaded, many people have been attracted to the music called by the latter name, to their neglect of the earlier masters of romance, and their consequent loss). The form of this movement is crystal-clear—the first theme, the passing, quite soon, to more decorated melody in another key; this section coming to the discussion of the first violin's tune, with the sixteen-to-a-bar accompaniment below; then the lovely gliding in again of the original theme (a pity that Side 4 does not go one chord further, and resolve the discord which precedes the re-entry); then the re-presentation of the more decorated matter, the key-scheme this time keeping closely in

touch with the original key of the movement (E flat). Eight or nine bars of *coda* bring us to the perfectly peaceful ending of as lovely a miniature as even Mozart ever wrote.

FOURTH MOVEMENT.

Allegro assai (very quick).—Similar in form to the first movement—the treatment of two main ideas. It starts with a terse little theme, that is not afraid of repeating itself. The second theme is in two parts—the first beginning at the bottom of page 24 of the score (first violin starting alone, answered by the three others); and the second part being that smoother tune, with the triplet twirls in it, on the third line of page 25. (In the score the whole Exposition is marked for repetition, but is not played). The Development of the ideas is only a couple of pages long, and arises largely out of the first tune; the little syncopation that was noticeable in the second theme (first part) comes in for treatment too, against this first tune.

A choice little work that covers a wide range of feeling. It is played with all grace and piquancy, the slight tendency of the leader of this quartet towards soloising being here but little in evidence, save where the music invites such treatment.

K. K.

VOCALION

(January Bulletin.)

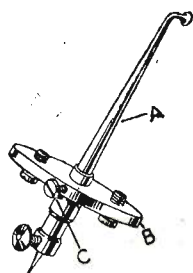
- A.0223 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**Rosing (tenor): Field-Marshal Death** (Moussorgsky) and **No, Pagliaccio, non son!** (Leoncavallo).
A.0224 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**Tokatyan (tenor): Flower Song** from **Carmen** (Bizet) and **O Paradiso!** from **L'Africana** (Meyerbeer). In Italian.
B.3115 (10in., 4s.).—**Gerhardt (soprano): Cécilie** (Strauss) and **Vergebliches Ständchen** (Brahms). Piano, Harold Craxton.
X.9511 (10in., 3s.).—**York Bowen (piano): Study, Op. 70, No. 5** (Moscheles), **Le Ruisseau** (Cochrane) and **Eglogue** (Liszt).
K.05142 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Adila Fachiri and Jelly d'Aranyi (violins): Sonata for two violins, Allegro assai, and Allegro vivace** (Pugnani, arr. Moffat); and **Sonata for two violins, Andante espressivo** (Boccherini, arr. Moffat). Piano, Mrs. Hobday.
X.9502 (10in., 3s.).—**John Buckley (bass): Old clothes and fine clothes and Full fathom five** (Martin Shaw) and **The Rebel** (W. Wallace). Piano, Stanley Chapple.
K.05130 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Malcolm McEachern (bass): O tu Palermo** from **I vespri Siciliani** (Verdi) and **Lord God of Abraham** from **Elijah** (Mendelssohn).
X.9487 (10in., 3s.).—**Gladys Moncrieff (soprano): Vilia** from **The Merry Widow** (Lehar) and **I was dreaming** (Juncker).
K.05131 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Watcyn Watcyns (baritone): Four Salt Water Ballads** (Keel). The complete second series.
X.9503 (10in., 3s.).—**Colin O'More (tenor): If God left only you** (Densmore) and **Tho' shadows fall** (MacDermid).
X.9504 (10in., 3s.).—**The Revue Orchestra: Primrose** (selection) (Gerschwin, arr. Higgins).

I believe both sides of Rosing's record are old issues, but they serve to remind us of the power and variety of his singing. His voice is his weakest point, though he does astonishing things with it and manages to conceal its deficiencies. *Field-Marshal Death* from Moussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* is honestly terrifying. "The corpse-strewn plain, the Russian plain, the immensity of which the music of Russia surpasses itself in presenting to us," lays bathed in moonlight, after a battle. Death on his charger surveys the scene with grim satisfaction. Mockingly he orders a parade. Anyone who took an active part in the late war will be able, easily enough, to visualise the horrid incident. The recording of this and the Pagliacci aria is first-rate, the orchestral accompaniments being especially well balanced. Neither Chaliapine's nor Norman Allin's comes near to Rosing's interpretation of the Moussorgsky song. I hope double sidings of the other Russian songs he recorded will soon be issued.

I cannot understand how Tokatyan's record was passed. His singing is well enough, but there is an appalling mistake in the accompaniment at the opening of the *Flower Song* from *Carmen*. A completely alien chord is played with remarkable effect! The other side is free from defect. This singer blares too much. What new is there to say of a Gerhardt record? This one is perfection,

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songs and accompaniments. I never can imagine how reserved, shy, old Brahms came to write the naughty *Useless Serenade*: but he certainly caught most excellently the spirit of the folk song. A young lover pleads to be admitted to the chamber of his mistress: she replies that only regrets would follow such a foolish action. He must wait! *Cecily* is one of Strauss's op. 27, which also contains *Morgen* and two other lovely songs. Note how beautifully the singer rises to the last long phrase. A record to be bought and studied. York Bowen makes his gramophone debut with three pleasant pieces given in quiet musicianly style. The piano tone is good. I hope he will record some of his own effective music for the instrument. Everyone that knows Boccherini's minuet—and who does not?—will be disappointed with this dull insipid movement from a sonata which the d'Aranyi Sisters play. The two movements from a sonata of Pugnani are, on the other hand, delightful. There is no contrapuntal interest in Boccherini's music such as there is in that of the other composer. The latter's last movement seems to be a kind of hunting jig. The playing is rather hard now and again, but masterly.

Every single word of the three songs John Buckley has chosen can be clearly heard. Singers please take note. His material is good also. Martin Shaw is being recognised at last for the fine song writer he is, but I don't think his setting of *Full fathom five* is right somehow. These are words no modern composer has yet succeeded with and Mr. Shaw has fallen a victim to their pictorial suggestion rather than keep to a simple melodic outline. William Wallace's vigorous song is from a set which includes the well-known *Cradle song*. Doctor of Medicine as well as of music he knows how to put a good song together. Mr. Buckley's record sets a high standard both for himself and for others. The arrangement of Keel's *Salt water ballads* is unfortunate since the slow and fast ones are coupled together thus destroying the obvious contrast intended by the composer. Nos. 1 and 4 are more successful than the others, but the whole set is very attractive. Those who turn up the poems in their collected Masefield will find a *Sailor's prayer* under *d' Avalos prayer*. Mr. Watcyns gives a good interpretation and his words are reasonably clear. More variety of tone colour would have been welcome. Malcolm McEachern's noble tones are exactly suited to *Lord God of Abraham*, of which he makes a moving thing, but there is a sudden alteration in pitch at the final cadence which is very disconcerting. Is this the fault of the recording? I cannot believe any singer could go up a quarter of a tone or so in that manner. At the same time a tendency to wobble is noticeable in Verdi's rather boring aria, in which the singer's voice undergoes an eclipse. Gladys Moncrieff recalls happy memories of Lily Elsie singing *Vilia*. The high note at the end is charmingly done. Her phrasing is careless at present. My copy of this record was a bad "swinger," but this is probably only incidental. What a change is here! A perfectly ghastly piece of religious stuff, *If God left only you*. Not for a moment do I believe the Almighty would be so foolish, after this. Both songs and the manner of their accompaniments are slushy to a degree seldom reached.

The sections of *Primrose* are welded together in any old way and a far too profuse use is made of the castanets. Much of the music is tunelessly undistinguished. Part II. opens with a bit of a muddle.

I hope the Vocalion Company will not issue records that obviously fall below their high standard, still less those with glaring defects. I feel sure that these few errors are the natural result of the Christmas rush.

VELVET FACE

- 605, 606 (12in., 11s.).—**Boosey's Concert Orchestra**: *Theme and Six Diversions* (Edward German).
 607 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Nicola Fusati** (tenor): *O Paradiso* from *L'Africana* (Meyerbeer) and *Ingemisco* from *Requiem Mass* (Verdi).
 608 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Philip Lewis' Palladium Octette**: *Manon Lescaut* (selection) (Puccini).
 614 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**John Dunn** (violin): *Nocturne de Chopin, Op. 9, No. 2* (Sarasate) and *Soliloquy* (John Dunn).
 615 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**Anderson Tyrer** (piano): *Prelude in G minor* (Rachmaninoff) and *Liebesträume No. 3 in A flat* (Liszt).
 1109 (10in., 3s.).—**Ruby Helder** (lady tenor): *Once again* (Sullivan) and *Eily Mavourneen* (Benedict).

1110 (10in., 3s.).—**Gaston Demarcy** (baritone): *Ne Reviendra—Tu jamais* from *La Traviata* (Verdi) and *Son Regard, son doux Sourire* from *Trovatore* (Verdi).

1111 (10in., 3s.).—**Band of H.M. Scots Guards**: *Suite de Ballet* from *Les Deux Pigeons* (Messenger). No. 1, *Entry of the Gypsies*, and No. 5, *Hungarian Dance*.

1118 (10in., 3s. 6d.).—**Norman Williams** (basso cantante): *Hope the Hornblower* and *Sea Fever* (John Ireland).

1119 (10in., 3s. 6d.).—**Norman Williams**: *Linden Lea* (Vaughan Williams) and *Wayfarer's Night Song* (Easthope Martin).

1120 (10in., 3s. 6d.).—**Norman Williams**: *I have twelve oxen* (John Ireland), *I know a bank*, and *Old clothes and fine clothes* (Martin Shaw).

I think H.M.V. have withdrawn Edward German's *Theme and Six Diversions* (what a good title!) from their catalogue, so this excellent Velvet Face recording fills a gap that needed attention. The work is in the composer's happiest vein: melodious, rhythmical, skilfully scored. The theme, seemingly of a Russian origin, is given out on strings and wood-wind after a short prelude *tutti*. The first diversion finds the theme on the brass with a whirling string accompaniment. The second is the German of the dances we know so well—a kind of delicate *scherzo* mostly for wood-wind and strings. The third is a gipsy dance in the minor key with a trio in the major key, during which the theme asserts itself forcibly on the brass; the end is a perfect tornado of sound. Tranquillity comes with the slow measures of the fourth diversion on strings and harp. A modulatory passage leads to a fascinating waltz in which flute and clarinet and violins trip deliciously about. Here again there is a charming trio in which the theme can clearly be recognised. The cello has a nice piece of counterpoint in the recapitulation. At the end of this diversion we again hear the original introduction followed by the theme in slow time on strings over a moving *pizzicato* bass; then comes a brilliant *allegro* section with a final very broad playing of the theme and a vigorous *coda* to conclude. The recording shows a great improvement over the last German work issued, the *Welsh Rhapsody*, but the wood-wind and French horns need more definition. The band play with great spirit and evident enjoyment.

Still they come! Another record of *O Paradiso* with, however, an interesting reverse, *Ingemisco* from Verdi's *Requiem Mass*, sung in rather a wobbly manner by Fusati. The music is certainly an improvement on Rossini's theatrical strains written for performance—and still frequently performed—in church, but it belongs to the opera house and not to the solemn occasion which finds a perfect expression in the Gregorian chant. Puccini, as has been said, looks at *Manon* through Italian spectacles, so there is no such perfect correspondence between the book and the musical characterisation of it as we find in Massenet's delightful strains. But Puccini's music is unfailingly melodious and vital. The choicest tunes are gathered here to be played by Philip Lewis' Palladium Octette. The balance is by no means perfect—the wood-wind are far too obtrusive on several occasions: more variety in scoring would be welcome. Why "Nocturne de Chopin?" What is wrong with the English Equivalent? It is, of course, the *Nocturne in E flat* plentifully embellished by Sarasate. I like Mr. Dunn's music better than the rather harsh recording of his playing of this and the Chopin.

Mr. Tyrer deals brilliantly with two favourites on a piano of slightly tinny timbre. The *Liebesträume*, No. 3, is a gorgeous piece of sheer luscious sentiment which finds a corrective in Rachmaninoff's stirring piece.

Miss Helder, if she will forgive my saying so, has a freak voice: a tenor, yet not a tenor! I feel the same about it as I do about the male alto—so I will not attempt to review the record. Gaston Demarcy has a voice of remarkably fine quality—full, mellow, and with the authentic ring of a great voice in it. His discs are really worth while collecting, for he records admirably.

Mr. Williams sings the opening bars of *Sea Fever* as if he were in a bad temper! His voice just lacks the lyric quality these beautiful songs need, but he is evidently a sincere artist and one pays full tribute to him for recording so many fine modern English songs. He is most successful with *Linden Lea* and *I have twelve oxen*; he gets the right bucolic atmosphere of the latter.

Could anyone set words to music which are themselves ravishing music? Shakespeare's *I know a bank* is a case in point. The music adds nothing; indeed, it takes away. The other song is noticed in the review of Vocalion records.

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- E.10237.—The Marek Weber Trio (violin, harp and organ): *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni) and *Largo* (Handel).
- E.10238.—Emanuel Feuermann ('cello): *Adagio in D* (Bach) and *Ave Maria* (Gounod-Bach).
- E.10239.—Robert Howe (baritone): *The Bo'sun's Lament* (Squire) and *The Longshoreman* (Chesham).
- E.10240.—Zita Fumagalli-Riva (soprano): *Sul fil d'un soffio etesio* from *Falstaff* (Verdi) and *Vissi d'arte* from *Tosca* (Puccini).

Mozart wrote the overture and four vocal numbers for the bright little one-act comedy, *The Impresario*, by command of the Emperor of Austria, to whom he was "Court Composer." He called it a "comedy with music." It follows mainly the lines of the old German "Singspiel" (dialogue, with solo and choral music), which was roughly paralleled in this country by the eighteenth century ballad opera of the *Beggar's Opera* type, and to-day is represented, more or less adequately, by musical comedy. Would that all such shows now were as bright, with music as pellucid and jolly! The theme is the troubles of a theatrical manager in getting together a company. An English version was put on at the Crystal Palace nearly a hundred years after the first performance at the "Pleasure Festival" in Vienna in 1786.

The overture, though in regular symphonic form, needs no analysis. It is just a high-spirited prelude to the comedy, rattling along at full speed, with all sorts of dainty and sprightly devices to keep the ball a-rolling—the staccato chords, for instance, and the little scurrying three-note figure heard in the third bar and frequently later—a sort of flick of the musical-comedienne's skirt.

The performance is admirably clear, the violins in particular getting excellent "life" into their phrasing.

Così fan tutte (or *The Love School*) is another opera commanded by the Emperor. It dates from 1790 (London production, 1811), and deals with the usual theme of light opera of the day—amorous intrigue. The opera has been tinkered about a good deal at various times—the libretto was so feeble that several entirely new versions have been patched on to the music. The loud chords, summoning to attention, open a slow section of a few bars, to which succeeds a lively movement, in the course of which there is a good deal of tossing little themes about from one instrument to another. This is a delightful example of light scoring. The deftness of the playing is noteworthy. There is a little lack of clearness in the fuller passage near the end.

The Grieg is the orchestral dress of one of the sketches in the eighth book of *Lyric Pieces* for piano. The colours are laid on boldly by the composer, and presented just a little staringly by the orchestra. The wood-wind on its highest register is rather shrieky. The middle section illustrates Grieg's weakness for the square-cut two-bar rhythm that persisted rather too doggedly throughout his music. The *Turkish March* is an odd conceit as the last movement of a concerto! It was a popular kind of piece at one time—noisy, but good sport. It was alternatively called Janissary music, after a privileged class of Turkish soldiers. Their original band contained only five oboes and a piccolo, with kettle and side-drums, cymbals and triangles. No wonder they were suppressed a century ago! Not quite all the detail of Mozart's scoring (in which he vastly improves on the Janissaries) comes out clearly; but this is a vigorous, swinging performance.

The Weber Trio gives us hoary favourites. The combination they affect is, to me, like Joe Gargery's small beer—"it do not over-stimulate"—but the instruments are used so intelligently that the effect is by no means disagreeable, though we have a little too much of the reed instrument, never well enough balanced, in the opening of the *Largo*. This is a good tune, but Handel wrote lots of others as good, which we should be glad to hear now and then. The harp's tone here is about the pleasantest I have heard on a record.

Another ancient of days, the perversion of Bach's first prelude, prompts again the inquiry "Why drag in Bach?" His tune is

so altered and overlaid by Gounod's admittedly clever trick that it is quite time to cease describing this as by "Gounod-Bach," or (as it is more commonly given) "Bach-Gounod." Let Gounod have all the credit. Bach won't mind. He's dead, so his tune can be vamped about as anyone likes. Only those who admire Gounod's slick and rather sickly talent in this game will care for this record. It is played more than adequately, with good round tone and clean phrasing.

After Bach muddled, Bach pure—like good bread and cheese after too many chocolate éclairs. (It occurs to me that there may be a subtly humorous intention in thus giving on one record the real and the shoddy. If so, I congratulate the company on the aptness of their object-lesson.) This latter is one of the best 'cello records I have heard—noble music, honestly set forth.

Robert Howe's songs are broadly given, in a resounding, evenly-scaled baritone. There is just a little too much edge to some few notes, that strike the ear rather heavily. The words are all clear. The songs are no better and no worse than thousands of others—certainly no more original. A little capital goes a long way, in sea songs.

A very appealing tone is that of poor Tosca, about to sacrifice herself for her lover's sake, to the brutal Scarpia. She does not forget to fill each unforgiving second with its full worth of effulgent tone. Just one or two emotional "edges" appear in the attack of certain notes.

The extract from *Falstaff* is Anne's song, in the second scene of the last act—in Windsor Park; in the course of it she declares "We'll dance in the moonlight," and a dainty dance-measure (after the first section of the vocal work—about a third of the way through the record) gives delightful suggestion of that. The light wood-wind orchestration is particularly charming, and the extremely tuneful music is a happy example of the joys to be found in the later Verdi works. How long shall we have to wait for a post-war performance of this captivating opera? Will the B.N.O.C. add to their benefactions by putting it in rehearsal, or can the B.B.C. be prevailed on to give us a wireless taste of its quality? We ought to hear this, as well as *Othello*, very frequently. The sustained flow of the singing is highly agreeable, as is the limpidity of the tone in its gentler moments. A few high notes again ring somewhat too keenly. The very slight vibrato is about as little of an annoyance as such an effect can ever be.

K. K.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

(February Bulletin.)

- D.B.784 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—Anseu (tenor) and Helen Sadoven (soprano): *Finale* from Act II of *Carmen* (Bizet) *C'est toi! c'est moi!* and *Mais moi, Carmen, je t'aime encore*.
- D.B.736 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—Battistini (baritone): *A tanto amor!* from *La Favorita* (Donizetti) and *Non più andrai* from *Figaro* (Mozart).
- D.A.220 (10in., 6s.).—Gigli (tenor): *Cielo e mar!* from *La Gioconda* (Ponchielli) and *Vesti la Giubba* from *Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo).
- D.A.632 (10in., 6s.).—Selma Kurz (soprano): *Marien Wiegeliend* (Max Reger) and *Ständchen*, Op. 17, No. 2 (Strauss).
- D.957 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—Tudor Davies (tenor): *On her contentment* and *To her I love* from *Don Giovanni* (Mozart).
- E.370 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—Carmen Hill (soprano): *O that it were so* (F. Bridge), *Four by the clock*, and *To an isle in the water* (Mallinson).
- E.371 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—Gresham Singers (male quartet): *Evening* (Leslie) and *Come, let us join the Roundelay* (Beale).
- C.1185 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—De Groot and the Piccadilly Orchestra: *Frasquita* (selection) (Lehar).
- B.1926 (10in., 3s.).—Marjorie Hayward (violin): *Romance*, Op. 17 (Friml) and *Valse*, Op. 37, No. 3 (d'Ambrosio).
- B.1927 (10in., 3s.).—Walter Glynne (baritone): *The Slighted Swain* (arr. Lane Wilson) and *Easter Flowers* (Sanderson).
- B.1930 (10in., 3s.).—Peter Dawson (bass-baritone): *Cargoes* (Martin Shaw) and *Wander thirst*, No. 4 of *Song Fancies* (Landon Ronald).
- B.1929 (10in., 3s.).—Brooke Johns, accompanied by Paul Fay: *It takes a good man to do that and Cuddle up*.

B.1928 (10in., 3s.).—**Hilo Hawaiian Orchestra : Moara Chimes and Waikiki is calling me.**

C.1183 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Band of H.M. Royal Air Force : Sanctuary of the heart** (Ketelbey, arr. Godfrey) and **Serenade** (Chaminade).

Figaro's advice to Cherubino, the famous aria *Non piu andrai*, is, it is hardly necessary to say, superbly sung by Battistini. His half serious, half jesting touch is just right. For once the deliciously ironical trumpet call at the end is faithfully recorded. The singer does not succumb, as Sammarco did on his record of the song, to a high G at the close. *A tanto amor* is supposed to be ironical, but Donizetti being anything but a Mozart, singularly fails to impart that flavour to his innocuous aria. The accompaniments are very well done. Gigli is more successful in the first of his songs than in *Vesti la giubba*, where his transports of sobbing, breaks in the voice, and general *lamentoso* effects are really rather painful. As a rule I like his singing and this record, vocally considered, is as good as any. It is the interpretation of the Pagliacci aria that spoils it.

The known is always worse than the unknown! So at a performance of *Carmen* one almost longs for Carmen's death to relieve the suspense. It is well conveyed in the dramatic tension of Anseau's and Helen Sadoven's (a new artist) singing. *Carmen*, you will recall, was considered to be a brutal opera by the critics of Bizet's day and the cold reception it received really broke the heart of the composer. He died at the early age of 37.

A few really beautiful things emerge out of the mass of music left by Max Reger, a man of immense erudition: he had not, unfortunately, the power to make his music live. Much of it is stillborn. There are some of the organ choral preludes as lovely as you wish for, others as dull. The songs, however, are more level in inspiration, and this tender little cradle song (which Julia Culp recorded beautifully a long while ago) is a general favourite. It suits the delicate art of Selma Kurz. Curiously enough she does not quite succeed with Strauss' *Serenade*. Gerhardt with a much heavier voice yet managed to give the song the essential lightness it requires. Kurz seems to be singing it in too high a key and she cannot touch in the words in the other great artiste's inimitable way. The anonymous accompanist plays the delightful—and difficult—piano part excellently.

Those who like opera in English should be grateful to Mr. Tudor Davies, who continues to add to the repertoire of arias in that tongue. These two are sung by Don Ottavio, a flabby sort of person in the opera, to whom, however, Mozart has given some lovely music. With a half-tone needle the effect of them is excellent. Mr. Davies's voice has never sounded better, and his breath control in the first song, a great test in that respect, is all that can be required. This is the Mozart of the best traditions of the "Old Vic."

O that it were so is pleasant music, but a bad song, for the composer deliberately "hangs up" the words to make a purely musical effect—thus: "it sometimes comes—into my head"; further, he repeats the poet's thoughts "that we may dream, may dream," and "Oh that it were so, *oh that it were so*," either in obedience to the music or to make the song of sufficient length to be effective. Carmen Hill negotiates the difficult word "dream" on a high note easily and, generally, sings the song well. Mallinson's two songs are very welcome as he has been far too much neglected by the present, younger, generation of singers. *Four by the clock* is one of his best efforts. It would be nice to have *Eldorado* and *Slow, horses, slow*. Beale lived in the eighteenth century, a skilful imitator of the sixteenth century madrigals, as this delightful example shows. The reverse side is of no great account. I wish I could get over my dislike of the male alto, but it seems to be ingrained. The singing is up to this quartet's usual high standard.

Selections from comic operas one has never seen are rarely of great interest, but Lehar's charming tunes go far to fill up the deficiency. The second side contains a luscious waltz. Had he chosen, this composer might have proved a serious rival to Puccini. Two nice little restaurant pieces make up Miss Hayward's contribution; this record is just the thing for when you are drinking your coffee.

I find it hard to forgive Walter Glynne for *Easter Flowers*, which is quite one of the sloppiest songs I have ever heard. The other side, *The slighted swain*, is delightful. Both are well sung. *Cargoes* is a fine poem, and makes a stirring song in Martin Shaw's setting and Peter Dawson's really magnificent voice does it full justice. I like his clever characterisation in the last verse. The

reverse is a frank ballad-setting of a well-known poem. If you like American comedians Brooke John's record will greatly intrigue you; having sung a while, he then banjoes, ending by a little more singing. And it really is rather attractive. N. P.

COLUMBIA

(January Bulletin.)

L.1604 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**Mullings** (tenor) and **Harold Williams** (baritone): **I lay with Cassio and Witness yonder marble heaven** (Duet, Act 2, *Othello*) (Verdi). In English. Orchestral accompaniment.

L.1603 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**Norman Allin** (bass): **Pro peccatis** from **Stabat Mater** (Rossini) and **Song of the Wooden-Legged Fiddler** (Noyes-Peel). In English. Orchestral accompaniment.

L.1602 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**A. Catterall** (violin), **W. H. Squire** ('cello) and **W. Murdoch** (piano): **Trio in E flat** (Scherzo and Finale), Op. 40 (Brahms). (G. and T., 2s. 6d.)

L.1601 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra**, conducted by Frank Bridge: **Mirella Overture** (Gounod).

D.1494 (10in., 5s.).—**Kedroff Male Quartet**: **Two Russian Folk Songs** (Arr. by Nekrassoff) and **Circassian Song** (Arr. by Tcherepnin). Unaccompanied.

D.1495 (10in., 5s.).—**W. H. Squire** ('cello): **Hebridean Cattle Croon** (Collected by M. Kennedy-Fraser) and **Home, Sweet Home**. Piano accompaniment.

3521 (10in., 3s.).—**Gipsy Smith**: **Love won my heart and Satisfied**. Piano accompaniment.

3522 (10in., 3s.).—**Gipsy Smith**: **After the Shadows and Can others see Jesus in you?** Piano accompaniment.

3523 (10in., 3s.).—**Gipsy Smith**: **Wonderful Jesus and He satisfies me so**. Piano accompaniment.

3526 (10in., 3s.).—**Edna Thomas**: **All of my sins are taken away** (*Negro Spiritual*) and **Ai Suzette**. Orchestral accompaniment.

3529 (10in., 3s.).—**Westminster Glee Singers** (Male Quartet): **O Peaceful Night** (E. German) and **The Goslings** (Weatherley-Bridge). Unaccompanied.

We have no finer *Othello* than Mr. Mullings. I suppose one must now alter the tense, and say "had," since his retirement from the operatic stage was reported some time ago. This speaks but ill for our chances of hearing Verdi's great work in English. Few singers can meet the histrionic demands of the name part as did this artist. In Mr. Harold Williams the B.N.O.C. obtained one of its most promising recruits some time ago. I wish more use were made of him. He is beautifully distinct when heard alone, in this record, and he has a sense of drama—a "bearing" in the voice corresponding to the carriage of the body one admires in a good actor. In this scene of the treacherous Iago's distillation of the poison into *Othello's* mind Mullings is at his best, and the two artists are well matched. The orchestral part (containing some characteristic strokes of the composer's imagination in dramatic suggestion) is fully adequate.

Mr. Allin has poor material in the Rossini music, which, like nearly everything he wrote, is quite unsuitable for sacred words. The singer aspirates unnecessarily, near the beginning, and scoops later. Not his best work, by any means. The other song is a pleasant enough trifle, but though Mr. Allin attunes his big voice quite well to its slight dimensions, he is not well adapted by nature for this kind of thing. You can almost always hear his words—a great virtue this.

The Brahms Horn Trio (with 'cello in place of the wind instrument) is played with fine vigour, though with a certain roughness. There are, here and there, some not very musical sounds (e.g., near the end of the *Finale*), and the pianist plays a wrong note or two on line 2 of page 21 (Eulenberg miniature score). This last point, however, is but a spot on the sun. Mr. Murdoch is an admirable partner for string players—keeping his end up well, but never stealing the other fellows' thunder. About this performance, though, there is a certain monotony. I do not think the

strings make quite as much as they might of the light and shade of the music. The *Scherzo* is cut—after the piano's opening twelve bars, we go to page 19, bottom line, bar 2; and in the *Finale*, from page 39, line 2, bar 4, there is a jump (with one bar, apparently, interpolated) to page 41, top line, last bar; then from bar 1 on line 3 of the same page to the last page, line 2. But why should anyone have to spend time in these Holmesian detections? When will the companies give us, *upon the record*, a plain statement of the cuts, if any? If grammophiles united courteously to ask this, it would surely be done.

The Gounod overture to *Mirella* is a typical specimen of music designed for the theatre—and a very good ear for effect Gounod had. This is harmless music, scarcely worth recording. It reflects the peasant setting of the opera, with its rustic dances. The performance is sprightly, and only towards the end a little thin-chested, in the strings. As one side of the disc is not completely filled, and the other is not much more than half occupied, a little more compression (which would not harm this work) would have allowed another short piece to be given also. Frank Bridge is a very sound conductor, whom we should be glad to hear oftener, either on the platform or from the disc.

The Kedroff Quartet gives us first something strange and sad, full of the fundamental melancholy of the Russian peasant. The volume and blend are uncommonly good, though one or two of the voices are rather dry in quality, for my taste. Their second song is a pattering piece, very dapper and neatly touched off. The *Circassian Song* has solo portions, with antiphonal replies.

Mr. Squire discourses sweetly, though with a certain nasality of tone, the lovely old Hebridean tune that Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser has collected. One can understand from listening to it the power of a fine melody—its self-sufficient nature. The piano here is tinny. *Home, Sweet Home* is played sentimentally, if not quite in that manner of "wallowing naked in the pathetic" that so annoyed R.L.S. when he heard the song on his trip to America. Is it a mild case of "evil communications"? Far be it from me to condemn the tune comprehensively; but it is a dangerous ballad; it is so easy to fall to the temptation to treat it with maudlin sentimentality. Mr. Squire would have gained our better opinion if he had resisted entirely. This piece is announced on the label as "Traditional." O good old "Traditional," what things are perpetrated in thy name! And O Columbia, to lend a hand in the game!

To the Gospel songs of Gipsy Smith, above all other ditties, is R.L.S.'s comment applicable. This is in very truth a wallowing in the most miserable mirth it has ever been my lot to hear. It is difficult, I know, for the musician to have patience with such rubbishy music (I speak, of course, without reference to the words). One remembers that tens of thousands have thronged to hear such songs, and apparently got benefit from the Gipsy's ministrations. "Why should the devil have all the best tunes?" inquired a great evangelist. A lesser decides, to our sorrow, that the forces of light can afford to cling to all the worst. Nothing will persuade me that better music could not be used with equal success. There is a grace artistic as well as spiritual, and the Gipsy falls heavily from the former. There is some interest in considering the origin of these songs. Some day I shall fill out an idea, which I think well proved, that not only are these gospel songs closely related to music-hall ballads, including the broadest comic songs (which is obvious), but that the inspiration and emotions at the back of both are fundamentally the same, whatever the nature of the subject or its treatment.

After this, *All of my sins are taken away* removes the bad taste from one's palate. Some severe souls would say that the transition is from simple earnestness to feckless levity. The truth is that we step from feeble sophistication to the perfectly natural expression of a seemingly mirth. This darkies' song, here sung with all rhythmic joy, is not one of the finest specimens of the "spiritual," but how it shines in comparison with the dreary monotones of the Gipsy. The little love song, *Ai Suzette*, also comes from the Southern states, and is engaging exceedingly. What a superb artist Edna Thomas is! Hear her at the Coliseum, and be enchanted.

It is odd that one gets so little real vocal warmth from most male quartets. I think they lose a good deal by adopting the odd staccato style that seems to be the badge of all their tribe. The Westminsterers are up to a good general level, but dryness of tone militates against full effectiveness. The Bridge piece is mildly humorous, with its touches of the *Wedding March* and another "classic," and German's part-song is agreeable enough in its simple way.

COLUMBIA

(February Bulletin.)

- L.1609, 1610, and 1611 (12in., 7s. 6d. each).—W. H. Squire ('cello). H. P. Draper (clarinet), and Hamilton Harty (piano): *Trio in A minor, Op. 114* (Brahms). (G. and T., 2s. 6d.).
- D.1500 and 1501 (10in., 5s. each).—A. Sammons (violin) and E. Howard-Jones (piano): *Sonata No. 2* (Delius). (Hawkes, 5s.).
- L.1605 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra, conducted by Frank Bridge: *Pavane pour une Infante défunte* (Ravel).
- L.1612 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—Norman Allin (bass): *Ethiopia saluting the colours* (C. Wood, with piano), and *Hark the Tempest wildly Raging* from *Pathenope* (Handel). With orchestra.
- 3549 (10in., 3s.).—Edna Thomas (soprano): *Gwina lay down my burden, Chere mo lemme toi* (Negro Spirituals) and *My old Kentucky home*. With piano.
- 3552 (10in., 3s.).—Rex Palmer (baritone): *Maire, my girl* (Aitken) and *The Ballad-monger* from *Songs of the fair* (E. Martin). With orchestra.
- 9017 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Rex Palmer (baritone): *It is enough and Is not His word like a fire* from *Elijah* (Mendelssohn). With orchestra.
- 3546 (10in., 3s.).—William Heseltine (tenor): *Faery Song (The Immortal Hour)* (Boughton), with harp, and *The Minstrel* (E. Martin). With orchestra.
- 3547 (10in., 3s.).—Harold Williams (baritone): *Like to the Damask Rose* (Elgar) and *The Two Grenadiers* (Schumann). With piano.
- D.1503 (10in., 5s.).—Dino Borgioli (tenor): *Flower Song* from *Carmen* (Bizet) and *Die miei bollenti spiriti* from Act 2 of *La Traviata* (Verdi). In Italian, with orchestra.
- D.1499 (10in., 5s.).—Dora Labbette (soprano): *Oh tell me, Nightingale* (Liza Lehmann) and *I attempt from love's sickness to fly* (Purcell). With piano.
- D.1498 (10in., 5s.).—W. H. Squire ('cello): *Hindu Chant (Song of India)* (Rimsky-Korsakov) and *Reigen* (No. 4 of *Im Walde Suite*) (Popper). With piano.
- D.1502 (10in., 5s.).—Lionel Tertis (viola): *Come, sweet Death* (Bach) and *Aria* (Porpora-Tertis). With piano.
- X.317 (10in., 5s.).—Pablo Casals ('cello): *Melody in E flat* (Tchaikovsky) and *Serenade (Romance Sans Paroles)* (Mendelssohn). With piano.
- 3551 (10in., 3s.).—J. H. Squire Instrumental Octet: *Si mes vers avaient des ailes* (Hahn-Sear) and *Narcissus* (Nevin-Squire).
- 3550 (10in., 3s.).—J. H. Squire Instrumental Octet: *Abide with me* (Liddle) and *Ave Maria* (Schubert-Squire).

Among Brahms' last and most mature works are four in which the clarinet is used, with remarkable facility, and with a perfect perception of its powers. His employment of the instrument in this late chamber music was largely influenced by hearing a very fine clarinet player, Mühlfeld. The work is recorded uncut.

FIRST MOVEMENT.

Allegro (quick).—Very characteristic of Brahms are both the leading themes used in this movement. Their arpeggio nature is a favourite device of the composer, and the first conforms even more closely to one of his habits of mind in building tunes, by commencing with the four notes of the key-chord. In order to keep the tonal balance, the 'cello frequently plays in its high register, the piano filling up the middle of the compass. The second main theme begins at the top of page 5, on the 'cello, and is in the major key. The first theme, when it returns after the development (in the 'cello) is considerably altered. In particular, there is an increase of the rushing scale work of which we had a taste on the second page, just before the entry of the second subject. The quick leaping figures of this movement are finely contrasted with the more broadly moving yet still agile even-beat stepping (cf., e.g., pages 12 and 13). A passage of scales and arpeggios, over piano chords, brings the movement to an end.

SECOND MOVEMENT.

Adagio (slow).—Clarinet (answered by 'cello) has a descending-and-mounting theme, in leisurely stride, varied (top of page 15) by another which the clarinet has first, in a minor key. The treatment is free, the dialogue moving serene and eloquent, unhurried yet unflagging. On page 16 the clarinet has a version of the first theme in which its main melody notes are emphasised, the smaller, more quickly-moving notes being omitted. (The 'cello's plucked notes here are not quite of the sweetest; and throughout its highest notes have a trace of whine). The leading theme is heard again on page 17, bottom line, upon the 'cello.

THIRD MOVEMENT.

Andantino grazioso (slowish, gracefully).—This is called "scherzo" on the label, but it is more like the older minuet. (Compare its feeling with that of the Mozart *B flat Quartet*, noticed elsewhere.) It is slight, and scarcely of interest equal to that of the other movements. A point of interest is the long sweep of the first tune—an extended melody. After this has been repeated by the piano, a minor-key section ensues, followed by a partial repetition of the first portion of the movement. Then comes a new section, with the clarinet moving in sweeping arpeggios. A return of the first theme ('cello) brings the movement to an end.

FOURTH MOVEMENT.

Allegro (quick).—The time is given as 2/4 (6/8)—two in a bar, but the beats sometimes divided into two parts, sometimes into three. This makes for that diversity of rhythm that Brahms was so fond of. The leaping tune that begins (in the 'cello) comes very often, in some shape or other. So does the five-semiquaver figure that the piano has in the second line. (Already we have our alternation of beat-division, it will be noticed.) At the seventeenth bar comes a tune, the complement of the first—leading up (at the two bars of slower notes, bottom of page 31) to the second chief theme, distinguished by its being partly two-in-a-bar and partly in three. Its second half (bottom of page 32) is given by piano alone. After only eight bars of this, the first chief tune returns (piano), its complementary portion being delayed by a little development and by a kind of "false start" (bottom of page 34). The piano, as before, has this portion to itself. Follows a repetition of the alternated two-and-three-beat section, in its two parts (second this time given to clarinet and 'cello), and a *coda* wherein some joyous arpeggios round off the movement.

The only fault I find in the playing is that the 'cello is sometimes a thought too strong for the reed instrument (most beautifully played); and that the piano tone, though pretty good (sometimes notably so) fails on occasion to give full sonority. If any are a little surprised to see Mr. Harty in the ranks of pianists, it may be recalled that before becoming known as a conductor he was one of the finest accompanists we had. His sensitive playing here is in the highest degree effective, and the limitation spoken of, I am sure, is purely that of the piano, not of the player.

The Delius sonata seems to me to suffer from the attempt to work in this form, that somehow always cramps this composer. Though he has adopted the plan of making a (nominally) one-movement work (its sections, however, are perfectly clear), I do not think he ever feels quite free; and the music, brilliant for short spells and a little dull for others, falls a good deal short of his finest. There is a short introduction, and then the chief subject, that leaps down the scale several steps at a time, is introduced. A more tranquil idea succeeds, and there is a little development, snatches of the first theme (a rather dull page this), and an expressive slow section, in which the chief weakness of the recording—the piano's lack of sustaining power, and its brittle tone at times—is felt. With a burst of liveliness interposing, the slow theme is dealt with until, after a couple more sections containing, one a new idea, and the other a little development of a figure already heard, we come to a reminiscence of the opening subject, and a few bars of *coda*. To me this work is somewhat disappointing, even after several hearings. Sammons plays like an angel, but the piano part, as I have indicated, is not really adequately represented here. The music is given in full.

The Ravel, an early work, and a great favourite, is cast in the style of the stately dance that, until the eighteenth century, was chief of the court measures in this kind. The composer imagines it here as an expression of dignified sorrow at the death of a princess ("Infanta" has been translated "infant," I believe!). It is scored for strings, wood-wind, horns, and harp, all richly used, and falls into three sections: (1) the tune given out by the horns at the commencement (the second idea is given to solo oboe and bassoon in two-part harmony); (2) the repetition of this by strings; and (3) a return to the first theme (wood-wind);

the middle, contrasting part, begins with a flute solo, employs rather louder tone, and is shorter than the first. It leads to a brief re-statement of the opening idea, *pianissimo*. The touches of modality in the harmony of this section, and the charming cadences throughout, with the lovely colour-effects, make this piece a little gem. Played with grace, as it is here, the record is one to enjoy for more than one reason.

The Handel air is the kind of music in which Mr. Allin shines. He has the power for these furious effects. The swirls in the orchestra are just the thing Handel could do so well, working easily within his technical range, and employing the conventional runs of the day to dramatic ends. There are one or two instants of less than perfect synchronisation between orchestra and soloist here. In *Ethiopia* the pathetic middle part is most musicianly. His robust style, that I thought at first a little too heavy for the song, makes extraordinarily effective contrast. The first and last sections are taken rather fast for my taste.

Edna Thomas is as good value as ever. The second song is presumably one of the Creole-French love-songs she does so charmingly. *My old Kentucky Home* is described as "Traditional." What precisely does this mean? The tradition is certainly not ancient here. This song is sung in a manner which might serve as a model for all would-be singers of these ditties, so dangerously easy to sentimentalise—and spoil.

Wireless listeners will enjoy hearing the voice of "Uncle Rex," whom we know as an amateur musician of taste as well as a scientific man. His ballads are as well done as could be wished, and his words, from much broadcast experience, are as clear as a bell. In the oratorio airs he is perhaps a little hard. The voice has fullness and good ring, if a little lack of variety in colour.

Mr. Heseltine is heard in the song of Prince Midir (a part which he played for so long at the Regent Theatre in Boughton's opera). Again the words are clear. The Easthope Martin song promises to be a little better than the usual ballad of commerce, but tails off towards the end. The words are feeble. Mr. Heseltine is too vehement here.

Harold Williams is one of our best baritones—with brains as well as voice. He makes a good thing of the Elgar, though it is not one of the composer's best songs. It is a speck on the sun that Elgar's word-accentuation is sometimes so insensitive. The Grenadiers trot, rather than march. If the speed was increased in order to get the song on a 10in. record, we have an example of the limitations of recording. (Some day we shall have that half-hour disc—from every company without exception. Speed the time.) There is good piano support in this record. The player is not named. He ought always to be made known, so that he may have his word of praise—or curse, as the case may be.

All these tenors in Italian opera are alike; they all aspire if they get a syllable on more than one note; they all are too nasal; and they all have a limpidity of tone that seems to be a virtue gone slightly bad. I do not care for Mr. Borgioli at all. Some may appreciate him better. I would advise "test and try before you buy" in this case.

Miss Labbette should look to the accompaniments of her songs. This version of *I attempt* contains some preposterous chords—for Purcell. That sort of thing annoys a musician beyond words. It is so tasteless. The voice is pretty but pale. Miss Labbette does not gain any more colour as time goes on. In this Purcell song, with its love-lorn burden, her peculiar tone is perhaps as happily heard as it can be. The Lehmann is nice enough, in its disembodied way. But these phrases have been written so much more effectively by scores of composers in the past.

The Popper 'cello dance comes out with plenty of point—a little too much for my liking. I prefer more consistently rounded 'cello tone. This of Mr. Squire is large, but he has sentimental leanings, and indulges them, to the detriment of the music. (Why, by the way, call the Rimsky-Korsakov piece a "Chant"? The French form of the title is translated correctly as "Hindoo Song"). Tertis' Bach air is a choice morsel, and the bit of Porpora on the other side makes a splendid companion piece. This is a gorgeous string record. The piano supports thoroughly well.

Casals, with a more retiring pianist, affords much the same degree of tonal pleasure as his brother artist. His music is more typical of string solos on the gramophone, but Tertis' choice has more value.

The J. H. Squirearchy will probably give a good deal of pleasure by these transcriptions; but the tunes selected for treatment are poor. The arrangements seem quite well conceived; but I confess I don't like to see—or hear—Schubert in this galley.

K. K.

BRUNSWICK

(January Issues.)

- 50051 (12in., 8s.).—Bronislaw Huberman (violin): *Jota Navarra* and *Romanza Andaluza*, Op. 22 (Sarasate). Pianoforte by Siegfried Schultze.
- 25018 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—New York String Quartet: *Londonderry Air* (Bridge) and *Molly on the Shore* (Grainger).
- 5194 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—John Barclay (baritone): *The Shadows Fall* (Burns-MacDermid) and *Give a Man a Horse he can Ride* (Thomson-O'Hara). Orchestral accompaniment.
- 2594 (10in., 3s.).—Capitol Grand Orchestra, conducted by David Mendoza: *Valse des Fleurs*, *Danse des Mirlitons* and *Danse Chinoise* from *Casse-Noisette Suite* (Tchaikovsky).

None of the Brunswick pieces requires a long notice, and this is rather regrettable, for we all know the excellence of their recording and the smoothness of their surface, and it would be nice to have more records and a more ambitious selection. Why, for instance, have we not got over here the Claire Dux and Elisabeth Rethberg songs issued in America last month? However...

Huberman has chosen two pieces frankly written for display. For anyone who wished to demonstrate the variety of effects that are possible on the violin this would be an excellent record to put on. Double-stopping, high harmonics, quick alternations of *arco* and *pizzicato*; all these things are to be found in plenty and are, of course, played to perfection. The phrasing is clear and the rhythm good, and such musical interest as there is is well brought out. Those who are interested in the *jota* will find a full account of it in Mr. Sydney Grew's articles in the Player-Piano Supplement.

New York String Quartet.—I do not think the *Londonderry Air* has done well to cross the herring-pond. Nor am I convinced that Frank Bridge is the ideal chaperone. Dropping the metaphor, I feel that the music takes too long to get to business—a fault that lies at Bridge's door—and the tune, when it does come, is badly sentimentalised and rhythmically distorted, for which the responsibility is with the players. The quartet are far more at home in *Molly on the Shore*, where their American "pep" only enhances the vitality of the rhythm. Surely this is much the best thing that Grainger has ever written.

John Barclay's sentimental ditties need not detain me long. He has quite a pleasant voice, and enunciation and intonation are both fair. I will not insult my readers' intellects by making obvious remarks on the music and its interpretation, but as ballads go these might pass in a crowd.

Capitol Grand Orchestra.—I heard this record on the Balmain instrument at the office and thought I had never come across clearer orchestral recording. The playing, too, is of a distinctly high order, and the wood-wind deserves a special word of praise. The *Danse des Mirlitons* and *Danse Chinoise* demand remarkable precision—and get it. And if the strings in the former number are a little too strong once or twice for the trio of flutes, that is only to say that no performance is perfect. I don't find the *Danse des Fleurs* wears so well as the other numbers, though again the wind and the clarinet in particular give a good account of themselves. This dance is considerably cut; the others are complete.

Readers will notice that both the quartet records and the *Casse-Noisette* items have already been recorded by at least one other company. Possibly there may be more duplications. Whether comparisons are odious or not, surely it is a pity to invite them when there is still such a quantity of fine music, especially of chamber music, to be recorded, and when the Brunswick bulletin is as meagre as it has been lately.

P. P.

Books Received

Sydney Grew. *Masters of Music*. (Foulis and Co., 6/- net).

Dr. J. Baratoux. *The Voice*. (Paris, A. Gutheil, 10/- British Sole Agents, Goodwin and Tabb).

Sir W. H. Hadow. *Music*. Home University Library. (Williams and Norgate, 2/6 net).

Book Reviews

THE NEW MUSIC. By George Dyson. (Oxford University Press, 8/6 net).

A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC. By Cecil Gray. (Oxford University Press, 7/6 net).

Many people are seeking a reliable guide through the mazes of "Modern Music." Actual experience is the best, but short of this, or, still better, in conjunction with this, they will find in Dr. George Dyson a delightful and scholarly guide, philosopher, and friend. His book has justly been acclaimed as the most noteworthy contribution to musical literature for many years. It is clear, readable, and packed with thought. The first chapter, "Questions of Perspective" will help to solve one of the amateur's difficulties in regard to contemporary music—how to link it up with past achievements, to perceive the goal towards which it is travelling, the ideals with which it sets out. In regard to the orchestral medium, Dr. Dyson predicts a movement towards such an orchestra as Strauss uses in *Ariadne auf Naxos*—in which every member is a craftsman of the first rank—as a reaction from the overgrown band of to-day. This will appeal to the gramophonist who has long felt better results would be obtained in recording by such means. The author exposes, in a chapter on "Melody and Rhythm," the excessive devotion of modern writers to mere empty rhythmic formulæ, pointing out in illuminating musical examples that Bach, with his rare intuition, gave equal value to both constituents, rather than emphasising one at the expense of the other. There are, of course, occasions when this is desirable and effective, but one soon grows tired of such devices as Holst uses in *Mars* and Strauss in the *Heldenleben* tone-poem, both quoted from here. Dr. Dyson pleads for a return to true melodic values, a shaking off of the tyranny of the dance over instrumental music. It may be that Eastern art in melody making has much to teach us, though this would force harmony into the background and cause a re-moulding of barring and notation.

The chapters on texture are extraordinarily interesting, particularly that on "Chromaticism." Multiple tonality leads in the last analysis, the author says, to no tonality at all; this, in its turn, leads to pure chromaticism, a technique in which the chromatic scale alone has fundamental validity. In the chapter alluded to above he discusses the aesthetic implications of this thesis in the most illuminating way. In the final chapter, the "Problem of Architecture," Dr. Dyson pays a tribute to the exquisite art of Delius, who possesses "one quality...above all others scarce in our time: ... a deep, a quiet, and an intrinsic sense of beauty." His works "must be tasted without passion, without impatience." That is well said. With regard to our judgments on our contemporaries the writer says on his last page: "We may envy our successors their perspective. We cannot forestall their verdict."

Cecil Gray, however, in his "Survey of Contemporary Music" thinks otherwise. He writes with a great show of knowledge evinced by copious literary quotations and epigrammatic wit. Undoubtedly his book is amusing to read, occasionally thought-provoking, frequently extremely irritating, often in bad taste.

But Mr. Gray ranges over an extensive field of composers, so his book has a definite interest and value to students of modern music.

It is a pity that men like Holst and Vaughan Williams were not allowed a chapter, whereas Bernard van Dieren secures that honour. I come violently into conflict over Mr. Gray's judgments on Elgar and César Franck. He seems completely to miss the spiritual quality of the music of *Gerontius*, which he finds full of "stale incense." The peculiar quality which is called mysticism is evidently antipathetic to the writer. Mr. Gray, then, is an entertaining, if not a very reliable guide to contemporary music; one of those jolly dragomen who talks hard with an eye on you all the time!

N.P.

[The demand on space for reviews has been so heavy this month that not only the usual Translations and Notes and Queries, but even the Miscellaneous Records have been unavoidably held over.]

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Sung by Geo. Berry, with Orchestral Accomp.
Follow Yvette (Ivy St. Helier). Vocal.
Sung by Chas. Bonheur, with Orchestral Accomp.
Has Anyone Seen My Pom? (Watson, Bull and Silbermann). Comedy Song. Sung by Geo. Berry, with Orchestral Accomp.
1374 One Little One More (T. C. Sterndale-Bennett). Vocal.
Sung by Lionel Rothery, with Orchestral Accomp.
Put away a Little Ray of Sunshine (Lewis, Young and Ahlert). Ballad.
Sung by Joe Price, with Orchestral Accomp.
1373 Rock-a-bye My Baby Blues (Billy Hill). Vocal.
Sung by Joe Price, with Orchestral Accomp.
Hum a Little Tune (V. Ellis). Vocal.
Sung by Chas. Bonheur, with Orchestral Accomp.
1372 All Alone (Irving Berlin). Valse Ballad.
Sung by Danny O'Moore, with Piano and 'Cello Accomp.
Danny Boy (F. E. Weatherley). Irish Ballad.
Sung by Danny O'Moore, with Piano and 'Cello Accomp.
1371 The Land of Gra-ma-Chree (Lewis Barnes). Irish Ballad.
Sung by Robert Kinnear, with Orchestral Accomp.
Go 'Long, Mule (Creamer and King). Comedy Song.
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1359 Half a Moon (Reynolds and Hanley). Song.
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Bands

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Accordions

- 1370 Lady Mary Ramsay. Strathspey.
Played by Kristoffersen and Malmkvist.
Lord McDonald. Reel.
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1369 You're in Kentucky Sure as You're Born (Little, Gillespie and Shay). Accordion Duet.
Played by Kristoffersen and Malmkvist.
What'll I do? (Irving Berlin). Accordion Duet.
Played by Kristoffersen and Malmkvist.

Dances

- 1377 Africa (Creanier and Hanley). Fox Trot.
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
Back to Colorado (Newton, Milne and Silver). Fox Trot.
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
1367 Sahara (Horatio Nicholls). Fox Trot.
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
When She's in Red. Fox Trot (Vocal Chorus).
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
1366 All Alone (Irving Berlin). Waltz.
Played by Bar Harbor Society Dance Orchestra.
My Dream Girl (V. Herbert). Waltz.
Played by the Newport Society Orchestra.
1365 Put Away a Little Ray of Sunshine (F. E. Ahlert). Fox Trot.
Played by the Roseland Dance Orchestra.
She Loves Me (A. Egan). Fox Trot. (Vocal Chorus, Arthur Hall).
Played by Sam Lanin's Dance Orchestra.
1364 English Medley (Henry Geehl). One Step.
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
Nautical Medley (Henry Geehl). One Step.
Played by Greening's Dance Orchestra.
1363 I Wonder What's Become of Sally? (Milton Ager). Fox Trot.
Played by the Roseland Dance Orchestra.
Charleston Cabin (Roy Reber). Fox Trot.
Played by the Imperial Dance Orchestra.

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THE NEW-POOR PAGE

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PROBABLY owing to the season of the year most of the cheap records produced this month are more of the old-poor than of the new-poor character.

ACO.—An exceptionally fine recording of Stephen Langley easily heads this list, *The Vagabond*. A passable contralto record by Elsie Fisher is *A Blackbird singing*. An orchestral record well above the average is *Merrymakers Dance* from *Nell Gwynne*. *Sir Roger and the Maidens* is a nice little pianoforte solo lightly recorded. Billy Desmond, my favourite singer of popular songs, is well represented by *I can't help loving that girl*. Our old-time friend, Charles Coburn, is most perfectly recorded in a charming and amusing turn in which he sings the chorus of *Two lovely black eyes* in umpteen languages.

ACTUELLE.—In order to get an entire change of tone quality for a dance I love to put on a pungent Actuelle just occasionally. *Dreary weather*, with its grand saxophone tone, and *Driftwood*, with its fine xylophone work, are both splendid for the purpose. *Step Henrietta* shows some clever writing. The Actuelle recording suits Hawaiian tone; *Moana Chimes* is not such dreary writing as most of these things.

BELTONA.—Best of these is the orchestral rendering of *The Butterfly* with its very fine flute work well recorded. *Heavenly Rhythm* is rather in a hackneyed style of waltz writing, but it is a really remarkably fine recording of a violin and guitar duet. The guitar tone is wonderful. *Danny boy* is a pretty Irish song well sung by a tenor to whose beautiful falsetto production the recording engineer has done full justice. *Choppin' the Ivories* is a good piano fox-trot vigorously recorded. There are two military band discs I am putting in my own collection: *Looking backward* (pot-pourri), a very clever mixture, and *Grand military tattoo*, a good number for boys. Scots songs by Minnie Mearns are *Will ye no come back again* and *We'd better bide a wee*.

HOMOCHORD.—There is a new pianoforte record by Gabrielle Methot, *Rhapsodie Hongroise*, No. 8, and two French songs, sung in French by an excellent tenor, *Lè Réve Passe*. Wonderful flute tone in *Gipsy Airs*, German.

IMPERIAL.—Here is *Danny Boy* again, this time sung by a baritone and having a nice 'cello obbligato. *Has anyone seen my Pom* is a song that made me laugh, although I was feeling sad at the time. Two numbers that reminded me of Portsmouth are *Nautical Medley*, jazz, and *What'll I do?* played by two accordions!

PARLOPHONE.—There are many mingled mangled melodies recorded by military bands, here is a good one on two discs by a jazz band: *Melodies of the Moment*. By the time this is in print there will be five new numbers of the (to me) incomparable Vincent Lopez available: *Come back to me* and *Lonely little melody*, *All Alone*, *Romany Days*, *Eliza*.

REGAL.—*Sunset on the Zuyder Zee* is a pretty little jazz thing showing the saxophone and musette in combination. *My Syrian Maid*, played by Alexander Prina on the concertina, with a pianoforte accompaniment is good. *All season tickets ready* is a most amusing recitation. *From one till two* is a good popular song of its kind.

WINNER.—First among these I put *Ogo Pogo*, the best record I have heard of these very fine contrasts of clever chromatic writing against flowing melodies. Another good one is *Go 'long Mulc*, produced with exceptionally fine tone.

* * *

From the above very mixed collection I will select the few likely to satisfy the more critical of the really new-poor:—

The Vagabond (Aco.).—Stephen Langley's vocalisation and enunciation in this are both perfect, the song is well written and not too hackneyed, and the recording is nearly perfect.

Orchestral records well over average merit are **Merrymakers Dance** (Aco.) and **The Butterfly** (Beltona).

Tenor song, **Danny Boy** (Beltona).

Pianoforte, **Rhapsodie Hongroise, No. 8** (Homo.) and **Choppin' the Ivories** (Beltona).

Flute solo is **Gipsy Airs**, German (Homo.).

Jazz: **The Ogo Pogo** (Winner).

* * *

I have been asked to pick out from my recent article on REGAL records a few specially suited for those having musically trained ears.

SOPRANO.—*Valley of Laughter*, Annie Rees. *Jewel Song*, Barbara Knowles. *Il Bacio*, Violet Essex. **CONTRALTO.**—*Softly awakes my heart*, Violets, Joan Murray. **TENOR:** *My Dreams*, William Thomas; *The sweetest flower that blows*, Ernest Pike; *The song of the wild*, Eric Randolph. **BARITONE:** *The land of the long ago*, Thorpe Bates; *Blow, blow, thou winter wind*, Kenneth Walters. **VIOLIN:** *Serenade Badine*, *Two Hungarian dances*, *The drunken piper*. **FLUTE:** *Welsh Fantasy*. **PIANOFORTE:** *Pays de Reve*. **ORCHESTRAL:** *Paderewski's Minuet*, *Catherine* (selection), *The Blue Bird Suite* (two discs). **MILITARY BAND:** *Prælude*, *Three blind mice*. **WALTZES:** *Valse Novembre*, *Kiss in the dark*, *Blue Danube*. Again let me thank Mr. Ellis of the Johnson Talking Machine Co., for facilities cordially given to enable me to find these beautiful records.

N.B.—I have purposely refrained from giving catalogue information because I wish readers to get the lists containing any numbers they fancy from their dealers, and then if they do not like the pair on the record I have mentioned they may be tempted to try another record of the same series.

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H.T.B.

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DANCE NOTES

Twice during the present month the Queen's Hall has been the scene of an event of particular interest to ball-room dancers; once when the Savoy Orpheans with an augmented orchestra played to a packed audience, and a second time when the final heats of the world's ball-room dancing championships took place before a crowd of spectators awed and spell-bound by the skill and perfect technique of those competing. The two events have this in common, that they were both exhibitions of amazing skill; and it is important to make note of this point not because one expected the reverse to be the case, but simply because the implications of this generally accepted fact are too easily overlooked. The critic will say that skill is all very well, but that we want more than that. And that is perfectly true. Dance music certainly tends to become monotonous and dance steps are inclined to become so too.

None the less let us at the beginning of this new year consider carefully where danger threatens, and how it can be avoided. In playing over the records which have come in this month it has become more and more obvious that there is a very real danger of the band dictating to the composer. Even if the latter does not give the band opportunity for their tricks, they make them, and worse still they are likely to choose such music as will best show them off. This is not an entirely unexpected development when one considers what an ascendancy in skill the executants of dance music seem at present to possess over the composers; it is nevertheless one that should be considered. Too conscious a skill in any art is a dangerous thing; and we find that the instrumentalist in the synopated orchestra is no less human than his brother artists. He has almost complete knowledge of the scope of his instruments: he knows their sensuous effects; and he has, moreover, the ability to put his knowledge into execution. Having modesty no greater, and ambition no less than other public performers, he is tempted to attract attention to himself by displaying his whole bag of tricks. The result is that more attention is apt to be paid to the instrument than to the piece that is being played; one fox-trot in consequence sounds very similar to another, because so little discrimination is made in the performance; and sometimes a deadly monotony is achieved. Not that the orchestra is always at fault; no one can be quite blind to the fact that there is a scarcity of good composers. One could, indeed, name the truly original tunes of the last few years on the fingers of both hands.

Now the recent competition has shown that monotony is a danger which also threatens a dance such as the fox-trot; but it should also have opened our eyes to the captivating possibilities of the tango, which to judge from this month's gramophone records, seems to have suffered a temporary eclipse. The necessity, however, for recognising certain steps as fundamental to particular dances is one that cannot be gainsaid. The beginner is thus encouraged at the start by what appears to him, the simplicity of the dances which he wishes to learn—there is nothing to prevent originality later on. Yet to a certain extent the competition sets up a fashion which many hesitate to go beyond. Let us, then, have more variety in our dances if we cannot have it in our steps, and above all variety in our music is most likely to bring this about.

We have no new tango this month, a fact greatly to be regretted when it is considered what a delightful contrast it makes to the fox-trot, and how soothing it is for its deliberate movements and haunting rhythms. The one-step does not languish so badly, but is poorly represented; poorly, at least, must be the opinion of those who find pleasure in this over-hearty dance, for it is represented by two tunes only among the higher-priced records, *Copenhagen* and *Gotta-getta girl*, fox-trot (Columbia 3555, 10in., 3s.), and *O Katharina* and *Step! Henrietta*, fox-trot (Aco G.15582, 10in., 2s. 6d.), both good, although already familiar; and by four Imperials (2s.), all of which are easy to dance to, but not one particularly distinctive. There is one Blues, a good one, but again one which we have heard before, *Come back to me* and *Bagdad*, fox-trot (Vocalion X.9509, 10in., 3s.). The waltz is regaining popularity, but still lags far behind the fox-trot, which must now be nearing the peak of its almost undivided popularity. The one that most took my fancy was *Serenade* (H.M.V. B.1936, 10in., 3s.), played by the Savoy Havana Band in a rather quiet but alluring way. *I love the Moon*, on the other side—and how much better it is to have the same kind of dance on both sides of a record—is almost as pleasing, but a little more familiar. Other waltzes which attracted particular attention were *In Shadowland*, played by the same band, with *Out of a million*, fox-trot, on the reverse side (H.M.V. B.1935, 10in., 3s.), a waltz which is very well

recorded, but perhaps a little lacking in rhythm. *When lights are low*, played by the Marek Weber Orchestra (there is one of the many new issues of *Sahara* on the other side), and put out by the Parlophone Company, is good and has the merit of being a 12in. record. This most sensible innovation has been noticed here before, but deserves further attention. There are other new Parlophones in this size, the best of which is *Mona and Isidor*, both played by the Marek Weber Orchestra (10234, 4s. 6d.). Vocalion K.05137 (4s. 6d.), a record made by the Ambassadors, is also very well worth buying for the same reason. But here we are given four tunes instead of the usual two, all fox-trots, played a little slowly, but more popular to many dancers for that very reason. We have *Oh Peter*, *Some of these days*, *June night*, and *Ida! Sweet as apple cider*. To return to the waltzes, there are two Aco discs which are good value (2s. 6d.), another version of *In Shadowland* (G.15583), and *All Alone* (G.15584), that very popular waltz from "The Punch Bowl." The latter record is partnered by *I'm satisfied*, fox-trot, a record which is striking for its acrobatics and astonishing noises, which remind one of childish memories of stomach-ache. This is no disparagement, except I suppose in the opinion of those who suffer as they read this article. Incidentally, the tune is played by the Atalanta Dance Orchestra. *Love has a way* is on the reverse side of Aco G.15583, played with plenty of noise and at the same time with good rhythm by Jeffries and his Rialto Orchestra. This matter of loudness is one of considerable importance, as I discovered recently at two small gramophone dances, when I found it difficult to hear the music. But perhaps the Gramophone Company will give us a solution of the problem in the near future? Imperial 1366 (2s.) is a waltz record which should appeal to those with narrow purses, for we have here a good version of *All Alone* and on the other side *My Dream Girl*.

There is nothing exciting from the point of view of novelty about the fox-trot records which have come to us this month. The best tunes have already become familiar, and the new ones are conspicuous for their lack of originality. Let us, however, mention the best of those which were not noted side by side with the waltz tunes above, and the rest shall go into a short list at the end of those which should at any rate give satisfaction. The palm goes to two H.M.V. records, *All alone with you* and *The dream maker of Japan* (B.1934, 3s.), and *Dreary weather* and *Bagdad* (B.1932, 3s.); both are made by the Savoy Orpheans Band. The first half of *Bagdad* is a little reminiscent of *Gigolette*, but it is none the worse for that. For those who pine for vocal accompaniment the best is *Love is just a gamble*, which has on the reverse side *Beneath the Burmese moon* (Aco G.15581, 2s. 6d.); the voice is exceptionally good. Paul Whiteman will always be an attraction, but why it is that he is content with such poor voices I cannot fathom.

The Columbia records have come in too late for any kind of detailed criticism, but the best are included in the list below. Those marked with an asterisk are most worthy of purchase.

VOCALION (3s. 10in.).

- X.9507.—*Wait a bit, Susie* and *Meet me in the Spring*.
X.9508.—**Take them all away* and *Sahara*.

ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d. 10in.).

- X.3-40020-1.—**Hard-hearted Hannah* and *Step* (Max Darewski's Band).
X.2-40626-7.—**The Ogo Pogo* and *Just like a beautiful story* (The Romaine Dance Band).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE (3s. 10in.).

- B.1933.—*By the lake* and *The Ogo Pogo* (Savoy Orpheans).
B.1940.—**Follow the swallow* and *She loves me* (Jack Hylton's Band).
B.1938.—**Adoring you* and *The Hoodoo Man* (Paul Whiteman).

ACO (2s. 6d. 10in.).

- G.15582.—*Step! Henrietta* and *O Katharina* (one step).

IMPERIAL (2s. 10in.).

- 1377.—*Africa* and *Back to Colorado*.
1367.—**When she's in red* and *Sahara* (Greening's Dance Orchestra).

PARLOPHONE (2s. 6d. 10in.).

- E.5310.—*Eliza* and *Cold cold mammas*.
E.5312.—**Put away a little ray of sunshine* and *Charleston Cabin*.
E.5308.—**Southern Rose* and *All alone* (waltz).

COLUMBIA (3s. 10in.).

- 3554.—*Doodle-doo-doo* and *Worried*.
3544.—*Rock-a-bye, my Baby* and *Savannah*.

RICHARD HERBERT.



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{ Serenade ... Chamnade

BEN LAWES

C. 1184 Our Musical Drama, Parts 1 & 2 C. Grey

DE GROOT & THE PICCADILLY ORCHESTRA

C. 1185 { "Frasquita"—Selection, Parts 1 & 2 ... Franz Lehar
10-inch double-sided Plum Label, 3/- ea.

MARJORIE HAYWARD

B. 1926 { Romance (Love Song), Op. 17 ... R. Friedl
{ Valse, Op. 37, No. 3 ... d'Ambrasio

WALTER GLYNNE

B. 1927 { The slighted swain ... Arr. H. Lane Wilson
{ "Old English Melodies"
{ Easter Flowers ... Sander-on

HILO HAWAIIAN ORCHESTRA

(Hawaiian Guitars played by FERERA & FRANCHINI)
B. 1928 { Moana Chimes—Waltz ... Otto Motson
{ Waikiki is calling me—Waltz ... Eugene Platman

BROOKE JOHNS

(Accompanied by PAUL FAY)

B. 1929 { It takes a good man to do that ... Brooke Johns
{ Cuddle up ... Brooke Johns & Perkins

PETER DAWSON

B. 1930 { Cargoes ... Martin Shaw
{ Wander Thirst ... Landon Ronald
{ (No. 4 "Song Fancies")



NEW RECORDS

(Zonophone Supplement No. 2, Feb., 1925)

12-inch Double-sided, 4/-.

CECIL SHERWOOD, Tenor, with Orchestra.

- A.288 { Yes, now thou art my Spouse (Ah! si ben Mio coll' essere) ("Il Trovatore")
On earth deserted (Deserto in terra) ("Don Sebastiano")

MAX DAREWSKI, Piano Solo.

- A.289 { Rustle of Spring, Op. 32, No. 3
"Nina"—Valse Caprice

10-inch Double-sided, 2/6.

ST. HILDA COLLIERY BAND.

- 2518 The Piper's Wedding Sergeant Major—March
MUMMERY & RICHARDSON, Duets, with Orchestra.
2519 Polly Oliver ... The Well of St. Keyne
LEONARD HUBBARD, Baritone, with Orchestra.

- 2520 Sahara ... Rememb'ring Eyes
2521 Hum a little tune ... June Night

CLARKSON ROSE, Comedian, with Orchestra.

- 2522 Go 'long Mule Does the spearmint lose its flavour?
2523 Oh! how I love my darling... Let's have a laugh

MAX DAREWSKI'S DANCE BAND.

- 2524 Sahara—Fox-Trot ... Words—Fox-Trot
2525 Hard-hearted Hannah—Fox-Trot Step—Fox-Trot

THE ROMAINE DANCE ORCHESTRA.

- 2526 { Ogo Pogo—Fox-Trot
Just like a beautiful story—Fox-Trot

THE "METRO-GNOMES" DANCE ORCHESTRA

- 2527 The World is mine—Fox-Trot I'm going—Fox-Trot

ZONOPHONE RECORDS

CORRESPONDENCE

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of a manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

HEMPEL AND GALLI-CURCI.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I note with interest the reply of your critic "J" to my comments on his critique of Frieda Hempel's concert, and am glad that I have drawn from him a more dignified description of his views.

I willingly admit all his strictures on myself, being a very humble and relatively unimportant person, possessing not only a belated appreciation of music, but also the inability to perform a single note on any instrument, not even blowing my own trumpet.

I am quite aware of my ignorance, but I feel sure that the point I raised will be appreciated by a large number of music-lovers. I cannot help thinking that "J" has misread some rather obvious parts of my letter, and can assure him that any programme I might draw up would not include *Diecieland*, nor could his own feelings have been more deeply outraged on the occasion he referred to than were my own when Galli-Curci sang *If no one ever marries me*. (I felt strongly inclined to send up a satirical request for *Mary Ellen*.) But what I do feel is that in these matters a little tolerance both to the singer and to the other members of the audience is desirable. And therein seems to lie the difference between the "middle" and "high" location of the brows.

"Mr. Middle-brow" goes to a concert. He hears much that agrees with his appreciative attainment, and enjoys it. He hears much also that is above him, and to this he lends an attentive ear; probably buys a gramophone record of it, and by that means grows to like it more as he understands it better. He hears, finally, some things which are—without snobbery—beneath him, but he good-humouredly tolerates it, not only for the obvious pleasure it gives to others, but (and this point, I regret, was cut out of my last letter by the Editor) because he hopes that by retaining the affection of those who only appreciate the lower forms of music they may be brought to a higher musical plane.

"Mr. High-brow," on the other hand, apparently imagines that he is quite alone in the concert-room, and that no one should be studied but himself, his outlook usually being one of absolute intolerance of all opinions but his own. As it is quite impossible to divide music-lovers into forms, classes, mathematical sets, etc., according to age or ability, every generation is bound to get a mixed condition of things, and a thoughtful critic will work for the betterment of the whole, and will certainly not consider it "profoundly immoral" to consider someone below himself. It takes a much greater person to come down in sympathy with others in order to help them up, than it does to sit on a pedestal above one's fellow-men, even musically. So that Mr. Middle-brow, so far from running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, is imbued with a much better and very sympathetic outlook. In fact he really is "the middle-classes," that very solid backbone of most things, holding those above him in great respect (as I do "J"—when he isn't going in at the deep end) and having a deep sympathy for those below.

I gather from "J's" last terrific sentence that he would not permit sentiment in musical affairs at all, but one feels that there are some, if only a few, songs which are quite banal, but which sentiment has made classical. For instance, I must admit (even if it earns for me the position of performing donkey in Miss Hempel's circus) that I should have been deeply disappointed if Galli-Curci had not sung *Home, Sweet Home* at the close of her concert.

Finally, I still maintain that many of the critiques of famous singers or instrumentalists who add popular items to their programmes, are not only anything but fair play, but do a great deal of harm to the cause of musical appreciation as a whole. In other words, "It ain't exactly what they ses, it's the nasty way they ses it."

St. Helens.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES RAINFORD.

COMPLETE OPERAS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have a grievance—not against you or your most excellent magazine, but against the recording companies—and, in the hope that my grievance is shared by many other readers of THE GRAMOPHONE, I set it down here. It is that amongst those truly wonderful recent recordings of complete operas by H.M.V. one sighs in vain for *Carmen* and *Il Trovatore*. When one remembers that the first-named is second only in world popularity to Gounod's *Faust* it is hard to understand why it has been left out. It has been recorded, somewhat incompletely by Columbia, but apparently in the early and bad days of the art of recording. What is wanted is a *Carmen*, complete and recorded up to the standard of *La Traviata*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, etc. *Il Trovatore* suffers from a banal libretto, and mainly on that account is sneered at by "high-brows" and critics whose critical faculties have been developed to the detriment of their capacity for the enjoyment of music. May I point out, however, that even in England we are not all Savoyards and I, for one, when attending at grand opera deliberately close my mind to the words and am almost annoyed when I distinguish one. What I want from opera is music first, last, and all through, and I am writing this in the hope that there may be many others who love music as music. The words of an opera are merely the framework on which the vocal part is hung and in themselves do not matter a straw. I commend this as a correct view of opera apart from the Gilbert and Sullivan type.

"High-brow" critics should please note that I, who write as above, love *Il Trovatore*, delight in *Carmen*, revel in Puccini's operas, adore Wagnerian opera, am soothed, thrilled and satisfied by Beethoven, find Mozart a never-failing delight, have a deep affection for lieder, especially Schubert's, and could go on *ad infinitum* with the list of music of widely differing class which all alike appeals to me.

The above to show that a love for early Verdi does not connote "low-browism." Now, will I find any sympathy, and will readers shed their fear of criticism and declare their hidden affection and desire for these two fascinating operas, which otherwise may be forgotten and in a year or two absolutely lost to us?

What of it? And both in Italian please and sung by Italian singers.

Yours faithfully,

On the High Seas.

MELOCHORD.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The recording companies, especially H.M.V., have been quite generous in the output of operatic records. The admirable series of Gilbert and Sullivan operas is now nearing completion. Apart from certain cuts, perhaps inevitable but still open to criticism, they are on the whole very good. Wagner also has done well with representative samples of *The Ring* and *Tristan*, and a generous selection from *The Mastersingers*. More recently we have had a very welcome series of records from *Hugh the Drover* and a complete set of *Madam Butterfly*. And this is to leave out of account the albums of Italian records of Italian opera.

But surely the time has now come to insist on the complete recording of some of Mozart's operas. I would suggest *The Magic Flute* as a beginning and it would be easy to arrange a cast of artists who perform the opera in the B.N.O.C. and are known to record well on the gramophone:—

Sarastro	..	..	Robert Radford.
Queen of Night	..	..	Sylvia Nelis.
Papageus	..	..	Frederic Ranalow.
Monostatos	..	..	Alfred Heather (or S. Russell).
Tamino	..	..	Walter Hyde.

and for Pamina, it would be a gracious act on the part of the Gramophone Company to restore to her admirers the voice of Miriam Licette in a part she plays so well. I still cherish her Mozart records, made when her voice had not quite its present loveliness and now ruthlessly cut out of the catalogue.

The casting of *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* should cause no great difficulty.

Why not a competition for the six operas which it is most desirable to have recorded in full or in a substantial selection?

And when we have achieved that, we may begin to clamour for some complete song-cycles—the *Dichterliebe*, the *Winterreise*, the *Romanzen aus Tieck's Magelone*—and a lot more Wolf.

Yours truly,

Liverpool.

L. J. H. BRADLEY.

THE ALIGNMENT QUESTION, ETC.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Mr. G. L. Johnston's machine, with its lilliputian tone-arm (Vol. 2, p. 308) may possess all the virtues he claims for it; yet the principle laid down by Mr. Wilson is generally true. However, that question can be safely left to Mr. Wilson himself. There is another point in Mr. Johnston's letter, however, on which I may perhaps be allowed to comment. His final remark *re* tension springs implies that his sound-box is not over-sensitive. Now in such cases an aluminium diaphragm is capable of lying like Ananias. I have one such box which will gloss over worn passages in a record even though they be patent to the naked eye and cause hideous blasts when a sensitive sound-box is used. Hence, as regards the wear and tear of Mr. Johnston's records, it is at any rate possible that his sound-box is too tender-hearted to reveal the whole truth. The sympathetic character of an aluminium diaphragm has already been mentioned by Mr. Goodbody (see Vol. 1, p. 197).

As regards Mr. Scantlebury's notes on needles (p. 308), I should like to make one or two remarks. In the first place, Mr. G. W. Webb has shown that a fibre needle does *not* fill a record track. Secondly, as regards needles of the Tungstyle type, Mr. Scantlebury's remarks are all right so long as needle alignment is perfectly correct; or, in other words, so far as they apply to the vast majority of gramophones his conclusions are wrong. Let us assume with him that the needle-point is rapidly shaped to fit the track in the first few revolutions and that subsequently the point instantaneously wears away to maintain a fit with the groove. He removes his chisel-pointed needle from the last groove of his first record, and places it in the first groove of the next record—and *it doesn't fit!* How can it be made to fit? By *twisting the needle round* to an extent which varies from one machine to another and may be 10° to 15°. How does this come about? Because the chisel edge on his needle was slowly twisting round throughout the playing of the first record.

Perhaps these remarks may serve to explain more fully what I meant in my last letter (p. 205) when I spoke of the needle rotating relatively to the track, and possibly they may lead Mr. Scantlebury to modify somewhat his general conclusions on needle wear.

In view of your remarks, Mr. Editor, on p. 272, it may interest you to know that I offered the method of needle-tracking which Mr. Wilson has worked out in such detail to one of the leading companies over two years ago. They declined it, on the ground that they could detect no improvement in tone, and subsequently informed me that they had known of the method about ten years previously. Is it not curious that a method which has been available for some twelve years, which, during that period, has been worked out again independently by at least three other people, and which is unquestionably kind to records, should never yet have been put into practice on any commercial scale?

Ilford.

Yours truly,

H. F. V. LITTLE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—It may interest your readers to know yet another gramophone crank's ideas, so here they are. The best result I have heard on a gramophone I have obtained on an old continental H.M.V. trumpet machine with an Astra sound-box and a large Waveola trumpet. By stuffing a Cliftophone arrow needle right into the fibre needle wedge opening until the blade was more than half concealed, I got a volume of tone almost equal to a piano in a room without any loss of quality in the sound and with no roughness. The records tried in this way were Harold Samuel's Bach records, the *C minor Fantasia* being the least good. In the same way I managed to hear the quartette accompaniment to the slow movement of the Bach double violin *Concerto* (H.M.V. Kreisler and Zimbalist) so clearly that it almost overpowered the violin parts which became an integral part of a complete whole. . . . The *Sapphische Ode* of Kirkby Lunn and the few German *Lieder* that can be obtained, beautifully sung by Julia Culp, on various makes of records, are also what I believe is called a "revelation" after previously hearing them on other machines which are not a composition of the best parts of various makes. The next best result I have got has been with a Cliftophone tone-arm and a Waveola trumpet in a H.M.V. table grand. With the arrow needle turned edgewise for soft rendering, voices and strings and piano are often very beautiful, the strings occasionally inclined to be a little sticky or sugary, and, weather permitting, a very fine

and searching full tone rendering can be obtained, and very loud. But the Cliftophone attachment varies from the very good to the quite too horrible. A very cold room seems to suit it best, but in a warm room and near a fire it becomes a ghastly screech.

Might I suggest that the H.M.V. include their best classical records from foreign catalogues in their English list. I have a H.M.V. French recording of the *Polonaise* and *Badinerie* from the Bach flute suite magnificently played by Gaubert. The piano is almost inaudible, but perhaps this is a fault on the right side. This record makes the New Columbia records of the same suite sound like a dreary Salvation Army band trying over a new "piece" for the first time. For those who like that typically Hunnish production, Beethoven's big violin *Concerto*, it can be had on the Spanish H.M.V. catalogue quite ably played by Juan Manen, and complete, the orchestra coming out very well. But I so loathe its treacherly sentiment, pomposity, and hideous and endless preparations for a change of key, complete absence of a sense of humour, and its elephantine elegancies, that I have not compared it to any other recordings of it, as I cannot endure listening to it. It is interesting, however, as a good example of all the defects which all the other great composers avoided like the plague, with the exception of Wagner, who wallowed in them. Need I be ashamed to confess that I once loved them all dearly myself?

I have also a charming Weckerlin from the H.M.V. French list, perfectly sung and recorded by Julia Culp, some Arabic songs and instrumental records from Cairo—H.M.V., and Spanish folk-music. There are obviously endless possibilities. I cannot understand, myself, the enthusiasm of others for the mica diaphragm, unless they prefer to have all the important minor parts and the bass instruments in the orchestra and quartettes and the accompaniment of songs, such as the *Sapphische Ode*, almost completely removed from a record and only the tune left with a mass of overtones which makes the music for the first moment sound as if it were being played an octave higher than it really is. However, seeing that most of the great composers are dead and, therefore, probably indifferent as to what may happen to their inventions, it is a good thing that someone appreciates these strange noises. (Have done so myself till I discovered I could get something better.) Personally, I use a gramophone to get the nearest possible imitation of a satisfactory rendering of a composer's works, also getting as nearly as possible the quality of the instruments used. As the violin string and the human voice produce a flexible, slightly fluctuating sound I dislike the perfectly even brass or flute effect of the mica sound-box on a vocal or string record. This was the most obvious defect it had, combined with lack of definition when compared to the so-called "romantic" sound-boxes. However, I can bear to be a "romantic" unmoved and hope for the best. I find every record needs nursing like a child and, regardless of the instruments or voices recorded, requires some particular kind of needle, which is the greatest nuisance. I must add that the excellent result I mentioned was obtained by playing the machine in another room, a painted panelled room with no curtains and with only slight central heating or quite cold.

Yours faithfully,

WYNDHAM TRYON.

Watford.

CHOOSING YOUR DANCE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—As a regular reader of your interesting magazine I have come to the conclusion that though your monthly reviews are in every way excellent and entertaining, not sufficient comment is given about the dances which the various companies issue each month. Now I feel sure, considering the enormous popularity of dance stuff, that a trifle more devotion to it by the overworked staff of THE GRAMOPHONE would be met with approval by a great many of its enthusiastic readers.

I claim to have had a wide experience in this line and crave the Editor's kind permission to submit a list of collected gems which I have found both suitable and popular for discriminating taste.

Officially a dance orchestra is judged by its melody and effects, and I unhesitatingly select Whiteman's band as the best, both for time and individual musicianship. The choicest of his I have found to be *Where the Dreamy Wabash Flows* (H.M.V., B.1921), a really clever, non-stop fox-trot with intricate trumpet and saxophone passages. This I regard to be Whiteman's best record,

apart from his *Rhapsody in Blue*, which is not a dance. *Somebody loves me* (B.1889), full of melody, despite the trombone duets; *California, here I come* (B.1811), rather heavy, because of a large orchestra, but you get "California" in its pure, unadulterated form; *I love you* (B.1740), candidly a beautiful tune, though it is a fox-trot, because Whiteman treats it in his usual compassionate manner. Those who revel in dreamy trombone work will welcome this record. Then there is *Paradise Alley* (B.1906), a catchy fox-trot with a cute little piano solo. I have only one grumble against this—the vocal chorus. Whiteman's men can play but they cannot sing.

Another band which is eminent is Gene Rodemich's on Brunswick. One can turn to a Rodemich list with confidence of having something unusual on each of his discs. *Mobile Blues* is perhaps the best of the bunch (Bruns. 2599). There are some smart piano passages by Rodemich and Wylie and effective glass-blowing duets. Some more unusual records on Brunswick are: Isham Jones's *Spain* (2600), a tango fox-trot, played in suppressed mellow tones throughout; *Eccentric* (2616), by the Oriole Orchestra; *What'll I do?* waltz, by Carl Fenton's band (2604). I am willing to stake this version against any other *What'll I do?* on gramophone records. Jack Hylton's recent records are pleasing in tone, particularly *Sahara* (H.M.V., B.1925), *My time is your time* (B.1875), *It had to be you* (B.1887), *Riviera Rose* (B.1808), and *Moon Love* (B.1743). In *Sahara* there is a sweet soprano saxophone solo, which Hylton would do well to encourage in more of his records. The Savoy Havana's gems in my opinion, are: *Confidence*, waltz, (Col. 3118), *Marcheta* (Col. 3339—the fox-trot), *Just for Awhile*, waltz (Col. 3413), *Hugo*, one-step (Col. 3455), and *Childhood's Memories* (H.M.V., B.1918), a specially noteworthy disc, because of its amusing adaptations of kiddies' tunes into a rollicking one-step. The Orpheans' finest I select as: *All Alone*, waltz (B.1915), *A Garden in Brittany*, waltz (Col. 3514), *When you are in my arms*, waltz (Col. 3493), and *Before you go*, fox-trot (Col. 3442). The star of these is *All Alone*, a waltz equally as pretty as *What'll I do?*

One or two of Paul Specht's are desirable. *From one till two* (Col. 3477), is certainly his masterpiece. *Bagdad* (Col. 3517), with *Oriental Love Dreams* on the reverse side, follow closely. These three fox-trots are arranged more for Specht's brisk method of orchestration than any of his others. One disc by the London Band on Vocalion I should like to mention, *Golden Melody* (X.9500), which actually has a faint flavour of Whiteman about it. Emlyn Thomas's fiddle and the baritone saxophone are splendid in this.

Now this list so far has dealt only with 3s. records; the cheaper makes should not on any account be despised, for one gets some of the tip-top bands on the 2s. 6d. discs, subtly disguised under various nom-de-plumes. The Corona Orchestra on Regal for instance. There is *Chili Bom-Bom*, the arrangement of which is the same as the Havana version on Columbia, and far more forward in tone! *Whisper those three little words* (Regal 8271) is another exceedingly good fox-trot that comes up to the 3s. standard. Winner have an organisation of experienced rhythmites in the form of the Regent Orchestra, as can be noticed in *After the Storm* (4071), *You're in Kentucky* (4072), *Honolulu Blues* (4018). Three records with a zip! Another company which turns out some smart dance stuff is Actuelle (made by Pathé). I greatly admire *I wonder what's become of Sally*, fox-trot, by the Lido-Venice Orchestra, by this company, also *Nocturne in E flat* (Chopin's waltz) by the Casino Dance Orchestra. Another band on the Actuelle which specialises in saxophone and trumpet work is Lanin's Arcadians, whose *You'll never get to Heaven* (Act. 10727), *She loves me* (Act. 10737), and *June Night* (Act. 10726) I consider really on a footing with some of the Savoy numbers. Those people who yield to the charm of the sapphire as well as the needle would do well to add *Lazy* (Pathé 1060) and *Oh Baby* (Pathé 1081) by the Memphis Five to their collection for I can honestly say that these are two perfect gems.

Finally, as a side-step from full orchestra, there are a few piano records which for their tone and execution, I should like to mention. *Ghost of the Piano*, fox-trot on Regal 8032, is particularly good. Regal seem to get splendid piano tone, and the short list of these piano fox-trots are worth attention. *Coaxing the Piano* on Zonophone 2469 (played by Max Darewski) also *Dizzy Fingers* (Zono. 2432) by the same pianist. Darewski is the finest exponent of Zez Confrey there is, I imagine. *Pianoftage* by Roy Bargy (H.M.V., B.1640). Out of the piano records I have run through with a fine comb I find that the above are the all-round best.

Yours sincerely,

Brixton.

ROBERT LESLIE BIGG.

AMERICAN RECORDS ISSUED IN 1924.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—It is hardly necessary for me to review records available in England, whether or not they are American recordings. This practically limits the field to the records of the Victor Company. Columbia has been good to us in issuing many of the best records from their English catalogue. Of their own work, praise can be given to them for attaining a distinct advance in piano recording. Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody*, played by Mischa Levitzky, is a good example. (No, it is the No. 6.) Odeon issues the best sellers from the Parlophone. You get the Brunswick recordings. Vocalion, for its more important numbers, uses the European catalogue, mostly the German. These are usually mossy waltzes and other banalities of the concert-hall. Nevertheless, they did give us our first and only records of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. The supplement tells us that they are by the New Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. The chorus is said to be from the Berlin National Opera. I enjoyed the interpretation, but not the recording. The First Movement begins with much promise; the Scherzo, recorded well, is only half there; in the Slow Movement the tone is characterless; and the Finale sounds like an old time recording when the voices begin all too blatantly. The chorus is especially bad, giving one the impression of a class of Italian students vocalizing.

The best of the Victor records are, or should be, in the red seal class. Here, however, one finds a morass of sentimental songs and their instrumental kin to wade through. The marsh is not bad going, albeit rather sweet and sticky, for one uncovers a few good records which have not been discovered by the H.M.V. Among the voice records, Rosa Ponselle should be included. Her record (if you need another) of *Ritorna vincitor* and *O patria mia* from *Aida* is dramatically powerful and vocally so; a possible nostalgia in the *O patria mia* is lost for that reason. (6437, \$2.) A more valuable contribution to the catalogue is her *Otello* record, the *Willow Song* and the *Ave Maria*. They are frank renditions of choice moments from Verdi's greatest opera and are to be preferred to the Melba records (6474). The Pontifical choir from the Sistine Chapel, Rome, have made two records. The *Laudate dominum* (Palestrina) and *Tenebrae factae sunt* (Vittoria) (6442) make a fine record, the Vittoria side attaining an unexpected richness in harmony. A noticeable rawness in some of the voices detracts from their impressiveness on the phonograph. None of the remaining voice records are worth importing, unless you feel a shortage of ballads, Spanish and Italian serenades, or last group numbers for recitalists.

Our violinists have nothing to offer, although there are some forty pieces added to our catalogue which would make fine encores. But, alas, we cannot use encores for we get nothing with which to build the programme itself.

Piano literature fares better. Chopin has Paderevski: *Etude in C sharp minor*, Op. 25, No. 7, and *Mazurka*, Op. 17, No. 4 (6448, \$2), *Etude in A minor*, Op. 25, No. 11, and Liszt's *Concert Etude*, No. 2 (6438). These are first class recordings, and among Paderevski's best. Rachmaninoff has himself and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski (our most expensive conductor) to record the second and third movements of his *Concerto* No. 2 (complete, 8064-5-6, \$2.50). What splendid records—the last two movements of a concerto, with which familiarity brings ever-growing pleasure and admiration—the composer at the piano, and with one of our finest orchestras—such recordings one may be proud of. The Schumann Quintet has been done, nearly (6462-3, a movement to a side), by the Flonzaley Quartet with Ossip Gabrilowitch at the piano. These impeccable artists and the clear and resonant recording make one forget that it isn't all there.

Orchestrally we can offer records of two superb organisations. Perhaps the world's greatest. And two famous conductors: Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and Willem Mengelberg conducting the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The records, unfortunately, are mostly in the class which the Victor supplement describes as "melodious instrumental." Mention should be made of the complete Schubert *Unfinished*, by the Philadelphia Orchestra (6459-60-61) and the *Andante* from Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony* (6430-1, the odd side being Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Dance of the Buffoons*). These last make an interesting comparison with the English recordings of the *Andante* under Coates (admitted to be the best symphony recordings in your catalogues). I must give my vote to the Stokowski records on most points. In the Victor records the instruments are brought farther forward than in the H.M.V. The strings are firmer and the brasses more brilliant, perhaps too brilliant. The wood-wind

is too far forward, at times sounding as though they are in front of the whole orchestra. For this reason the orchestral tone balance may not be correct, but it all makes for great distinctness. Willem Mengleberg, conducting the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, gives us a most valuable record of the St. Saens' *Omphale's Spinning Wheel* (989, 10in., \$1.50). The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, under Rudolph Ganz, record well in the *Euryanthe Overture* of Weber (55229, 12in., blue label, \$1.50). But of overtures we have had many; *Raymond*, *Orpheus in Hades*, *Martha*, and *Gazza Ladra* (Rossini), all by the Victor Symphony Orchestra, an organisation not as good as the H.M.V. Symphony Orchestra, but with great merit for the cheapest label (Black, \$1.25 and \$0.75). I must remind you of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which is now in the H.M.V. catalogue. In this number the jazz orchestra becomes independent of the theatre and the dance hall. Jazz coming of age. Its Rabelaisian humour makes it a composition to notice.

Yours faithfully,

Minneapolis.

K. E. BRITZIUS.

AMERICAN STANDARDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Although I have been a subscriber to THE GRAMOPHONE for four months, laziness has hitherto prevented me from acknowledging the satisfaction that journal has awarded me. It seems to me (and I suppose to most of its readers) that it must necessarily act as a great stimulant to the manufacture of acceptable music for the gramophone. I find it the only medium in English that attempts to render impartial criticisms of records issued; not only commenting upon the mechanical excellence of the discs, but upon the quality of the music itself, which, of course, is the important thing.

But it is not my purpose to annoy you with obvious remarks about THE GRAMOPHONE'S integrity, but rather to render a little information about the condition of the industry in America, which you may find interesting.

America is not a musical country. There are many excellent orchestras and a famous and mediocre opera company, but these are patronised by a tiny fraction only of the country's population. Musical celebrities enjoy huge audiences, it is true, but these audiences come not to hear but to see the great man; discussing afterwards not so much his program as the way he arranges his hair. Consequently the gramophone companies make contracts with these famous ones, and issue the most popular and worthless bits on their repertoires in record form. In England the same condition exists to a lesser extent; in America there is no Bach, no Beethoven on pianoforte records. All of the more sugary works of Chopin are issued in quadruplicate, and there are hordes of interpretations of the Rachmaninoff *C-sharp minor Prelude*, but the only test of a record here is: Will it sell? The best orchestras in the country waste their time on such stuff as *Rustle of Spring*, the *Priests' March* from *Athalie*, the *Coronation March* from the *Prophet*, cut versions of *Finlandia*, *Scheherazade*, and most of the works of Tchaikovsky, but there are no even indifferent recordings of any of the Beethoven symphonies. Most of the best records on sale here now are imported from England by the Columbia and Victor Companies.

However, there are a few bright spots. The mechanical details are generally of a very superior order; with the single exception of surface friction, music for the gramophone is recorded here as well as I have ever heard it. There are also a few records of works that are worth attending in concert halls, notably the New York Philharmonic records of the *Coriolanus Overture*, the Philadelphia Orchestra records of the *Tannhäuser Overture*, the *Danse des Bouffons* from *Snegourotchka*, and the *Andante Cantabile* from Tchaikovsky's *Fifth* by the same organisation. There are also some fine piano records by Olga Samaroff and Alfred Cortot. As an example of the high standard of modern orchestral recording in America the Philadelphia record of the *Danse des Bouffons* should be compared to that of Mr. Coates. The former is infinitely superior. The great bulk of the American catalogues is composed of records from Italian operas by famous singers. When a musically possible work is attempted it is invariably cut.

But undoubtedly better days are at hand. The Victor Company has just released its first complete symphony—the first ever issued here that has been made in this country, and it is without argument the most remarkable recording of an orchestra that I have ever

listened to. The work itself is the *Unfinished Symphony*, of which there are imported records already, but for clarity and differentiation of instruments, smoothness of performance, balance of tone and freedom of extraneous noises there is nothing to compare with it on the repertoire of the gramophone. There are no cuts, the work being complete on three double-sided 12in. records enclosed in an album with two double-sided records of the Schumann Quintette made by the Flonzaley Quartette and Ossip Gabrilowitsch. These are also splendidly done. This album set is the first issued in America. Others are to follow, and it is possible that before very long it will not be necessary for those of us who like music to send to England and Germany for our records. Incidentally, the symphony is played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, at present the best in the country.

The English Columbia records have smoother surfaces than any American records. The surfaces of other English companies' products about equal the corresponding companies here (English Aeolian are about the same as American Aeolian, H.M.V. are in the same class as Victor, etc.). It is difficult to compare the merits of English and American recording from a mechanical standpoint; in general it may be said that with the exception of the American *Unfinished Symphony* records they are equal.

Before I close I would like to commend very much indeed the instigator of the National Gramophonic Society of which I naturally hastened to be a member; it is a fine scheme to distribute records through an organisation possessing taste, and to him who gave birth to the idea I extend my heartiest thanks, regretting only that his name is unknown to me.

Very truly yours,

New Jersey, U.S.A.

C. G. BURKE.

THE VICTOR CATALOGUE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—As I am the possessor of a fairly large number of Victor recordings it may interest your readers to get some first-hand information regarding them. They may be obtained through all accredited H.M.V. agents. I have adopted the method of discussing the records under the artists' names.

ALDA.—The Victor list is a very long one, the artist is a great favourite in America and is admittedly the finest lyric soprano at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Her best Victor recordings are the following: *Ave Maria* and *Angel's Serenade* accompanied by Elman (8001). *Selva opaca* (*William Tell*) and the aria from *La Wally* (537). *By the waters of Minnetonka* and *Deep River* (527). *Panis angelicus* and *L'altra notte* (6353). *Panis angelicus* (74399), single-sided (the *L'altra notte* is on H.M.V. list!). *Vale* and *I heard you go by* (1005) (new recordings and very fine).

DESTINN.—*Elisabeth's Gebet* and *Kennst du das Land* (6085). No collector should be without these beautiful renderings.

ELMAN.—Drdla's *Serenade* and *Faust Fantasy* (601).

FARRAR.—*Un bel di* and *Vissi d'arte* (6110). Perfect records now no more available on H.M.V. *Si mi chiamano Mimi* and *Addio di Mimi* (6106). These arias and those of 6110 represent Farrar at her very best. *Songs my mother taught me* and *Believe me if all those endearing* (622). This is the best rendering of the Dvorák song I know of. *Wanderers Nachtlied* (with Schumann-Heink) (87504). A classic among recordings.

GLUCK.—The great jewels, the German duets by Gluck and Reimers are only available on Victor. I recommend the following one: *Du, du liegst mir im Herzen* and *Treue Liebe* (3011). *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* and *When the swallows homeward fly* (3077)—Zimbalist accompanies both. *Canzonetta* and *Still wie die Nacht* (657).

HEMPER.—The gem of the whole Victor catalogue is *Ah vous dirai-je Maman*, the finest soprano record in existence; coupled with *Parla* the number is 6364, single-sided 88404.

HOMER.—Sings brilliantly Liszt's *Lorelei* coupled with *My heart ever faithful* (6171), single-sided 88204. *Printemps qui commence*—the best recording of the aria—coupled with *Mon cœur* (6164), single-sided 88199.

JERITZA.—The best record of this most famous all-dramatic soprano is the *Senta's Ballade* (single-sided only!) No. 74776.

JOHNSON sings beautifully *Lassie o'mine* and *Sunrise and you* (692).

JOURNET.—His *Noël*, coupled with *Salutaris Hostia* (6179); in my opinion the best record of the bass voice.

MATZENAUBER.—*Voi lo sapete* and *Ich sah das Kind* (6327), both excellent. *Il segreto* and *Stride la vampa* (999). Absolutely new recordings that fairly take one's breath away.

MCCORMACK.—*O sleep why dost thou leave me* and *Take, oh take those lips away* (749).

PONSELLE.—The particularly bright young star at the Metropolitan. *O patria mia* and *Ritorna vincitor* (6437)—very fine and fresh. *Carmè* and *Maria Mari* (1013).

POWELL.—*Kol Nidrei* and *Valse triste* (6256) (former now only available on Victor).

SCHUMANN-HEINK.—*Das Erkennen* and *Träume* (6272). *Der Tod und das Mädchen* and *Mondnacht* (996), newest recordings of the great living contralto.

BLUE LABEL: *Du bist die Ruhe* (Hinkle) and *Die Lorelei* (Miller) (55056). *Ständchen* (Reimers) and *Celeste Aida* (Althouse) (55045); the latter is better than that of Paoli, the best H.M.V. recording.

BLACK LABEL: *Der Wanderer* and *Die Uhr* (van Eweyk) (68339), beautiful renderings of these classic *Lieder*.

Débuts on Victor.—DUSOLINA GIANNINI has made a brilliant début with two songs by Sadlers, *In mezo al Mare* and *Fa la nina bambino* (45413). Two important contralto débuts are those of ALCOCK (Metropolitan, New York) and MEISLE (Chicago Opera). The respective numbers are 45377 and 45407.

I hope the above list may be of use to your readers; it includes only recordings of impeccable merit. In conclusion I would again like to call attention to the Hempel record, which I claim to be the finest record of the most beautiful voice in existence.

Wishing THE GRAMOPHONE all success,

I am, yours sincerely,

Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Dr. C. DE VILLIERS.

SYMPHONISED SYNCOPATION.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—A man I know said to me recently that he put on his wireless one night with the intention of dancing to it, but that the way the music was being played made it impossible, and he therefore used the gramophone. This may be exaggerated, but I wonder if it is the result of the first syncopated concert by the Savoy Bands and the Boston Orchestra at the Queen's Hall on January 3rd? This concert is worth discussing, and a short sketch of the programme may be of some interest. It was divided into three parts: (1) Successes of the past; (2) evolution of syncopated music from *Alexander's Rag-time Band* to symphonised syncopation; (3) symphonised music of to-day and to-morrow. My favourites were as follows: Part 1: A piano duet and *Allah's Holiday* by the Boston Orchestra. Part 2: Two beautiful saxophone solos, *Le Cygne* and *Comin' through the Rye*, *Wagneriana*, and fragments of the *New World Symphony*. Part 3: *Raggedy Ann*, *By the lake*, *Shadowland*; their medley one-steps of national tunes were also played, but are too well known to comment upon. The concert seemed to have two objects, that of enabling wireless enthusiasts to see the Savoy Bands in person, and also to illustrate the new symphonised syncopation, or (as I think of it) a new form of dance orchestration. This seems to be a fresh way of presenting music in dance time, yet given in such a way that it can be listened to, as well as danced to. In some things it was more noticeable and effective than in others; *Raggedy Ann* (recorded on H.M.V.) was the best example of this. *By the lake* and *Shadowland* were also instructive. So much for the syncopated side of the concert. Two things, and one especially, remain in my mind, *Wagneriana* and fragments from the *New World Symphony*, this latter touching a different chord both in execution and musical history, but the audience did not realise it because they were not a Queen's Hall audience, and preferred the freakish "Eccentric" which followed. Why was not the classical course pursued further? Why did we have a few bars of Grieg, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky instead of a complete work? . . . The *New World* fragment proved a little, but not enough. The newspapers did not seem to care whether they reviewed the concert sensibly or not. The *Telegraph* was the only exception, and gave an interesting, fair, and just criticism, in which the writer stated that he regretted Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was not included, as it was the only outstanding example (at present) of the meeting of ancient and modern in music both in form and matter. Paul Whiteman has started the movement in this direction, and why was it not carried on at this concert? Why did we not hear "1812," *Grand march* (*Tannhäuser*),

and other such works scored or arranged for symphonic band? Bliss, Ravel, Goossens, Stravinsky could all write effectively for such a band. Let us hope that at the next concert there will be some real compositions played and no fragments, for we want to listen, and we want to see what a symphonic band can do with some of the classical composers or with compositions written especially for them.

Hammersmith.

Yours faithfully,

J. ELLIOTT SMITH.

[Our musical critic, "J," evidently agrees; for his report was as follows:—

"One thing was, at any rate, perfectly clear about the first concert given by the Savoy Orpheans (and amalgamated bands!) at Queen's Hall on January 3rd: the audience were out to enjoy themselves, which they did right heartily! It was delightful to be in such a friendly, jolly atmosphere. As every critic has remarked, the playing of the bands was, technically, masterly; but they badly need composers to write music worthy of them. The habit of inserting snippets from well-known works into rather indifferent dance pieces is to be deprecated. The contrast is too great! The next concerts will be followed with much interest. Shall a prophet, indeed, arise in Israel? There is a wonderful chance awaiting our young bloods if they can take it. I'm looking forward to some more happy evenings."—Ed.]

PIANOFORTE RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—The two recent articles on pianoforte records, quite the most interesting articles you have yet given us, must have given rise to some curious reflections in your readers' minds. The prominence given to Arthur de Greef, with which most of your readers will agree, opens the interesting question as to why this veteran artist, by no means one's favourite performer in the concert hall, should be so decidedly the best recording pianist. No doubt he plays the Grieg Concerto *con amore*, as an old intimate of the composer and as the recipient of the authentic interpretation, shall we say; but he is equally at home with the other standard concerti. Perhaps it is because he has given special thought to recording problems that he is an outstanding success where younger players with more modern technique often fail. Of the two outstanding virtuosi to-day, one, Paderewski, is a partial success only, whilst the other, Moritz Rosenthal, has not yet consented to record at all. One wonders how the latter's phenomenal technique would record.

Now from the particular to the general. Why is it that the tone of the pianoforte is so much better in concerted works than in a solo performance? Is some obscure problem of acoustics concerned here? I have searched solo records by all pianists in vain for that full round resonance which is so satisfactory a quality in the H.M.V. concerti. I invite your observations on this interesting comparison.

I conclude with a word of compliment on the magazine, not on its musical side, *cela va sans dire*, but on its excellent literary English, its good paper, its clear typography, and its freedom from misprints. You have shown the periodical press that a technical journal need not be, what it has hitherto always been, a combination of bad English and poor typography.

Yours faithfully,

Streatham Vale.

W. T. FAIRHALL.

THE CONCERTO COMPETITION.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The idea of the competition was a very happy one and has served to show the great popularity of this class of music. The next concerto that should be considered is that of Rachmaninoff, in C minor. This magnificent work, perhaps the composer's best, was broadcast two or three times last year from 2 LO; this surely is a sign of its popularity! Those who were fortunate enough to hear it played by that brilliant young pianist, Solito de Solis, at the Queen's Hall Promenade Concert last year, will not easily forget the unbounded enthusiasm which prevailed at the finish. We were treated to a rare exposition of sheer artistry, backed up by a wonderful display of technique which was not, however, unduly thrust upon one's notice. Failing Rachmaninoff himself there is, perhaps, no one available who could give a more faithful rendering of this work, but, if possible, let the records be of the black label variety this time, as four or five records at 8s. 6d. is a big strain nowadays.

Yours very truly,

Norbury.

LESLIE HILL.

Gramophone Societies' Reports

Sumptuary laws must be enacted! Will Recording Secretaries please note that in future 350 words only will be allotted to them? Reports of Mr. H. L. Rink's lectures are by this time superfluous! And, generally speaking, information of general interest to other readers is far more valuable than tributes to members or local dealers or world-famous records.

By the way the Hon. Sec. of the Ealing Society has sent in the best printed programme of a concert that we have ever seen. It is such an excellent model that we commend it to everyone who can beg or borrow a copy from a member of the society.

The South-East London Recorded Music Society, of which the Editor is a patron, has a capital list of fixtures for this season, and at the request of Mr. Ernest Baker, the indefatigable secretary ("Aiguille" of *The Musical Standard*), we add the dates: Feb. 9th, Italian Opera—excerpts from *Rigoletto* and miscellaneous items, demonstrated by Henry Lewis, Esq.; March 9th, Elgar—lecture-demonstration by Walter Yeomans, Esq.; April 6th, Instrumental Music, including Schumann's *Carnaval* played by Cortot; May 11th, Mozart, Haydn and the Orchestra, including a symphony by Mozart and a lecture-demonstration by "Aiguille," who, after three meetings on June 8th, July 13th, and August 10th, "to be selected by members," will give another lecture-demonstration on Sept. 14th on "Modern British Music." There will be plenty to talk about by that date!

EALING RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.—Mr. Elliot Smith, the new member of the above Society, gave the most wonderful programme ever listened to by the fortunate members present at the January meeting in Ernest Benstead's Audition Salon, Uxbridge Road, Ealing, W. 5.

When he joined us I mentioned at the December meeting that he would prove an acquisition to the Society. And events proved they were more than fully justified. I am expressing the opinion of the chairman, Mr. W. Ross, and all the members when I state we wish Mr. Elliot-Smith a long membership of our Society, and trust he will give us another treat in the near future.

Mr. W. W. Brown, of Hanwell, will give a Parlophone programme for Feb. 5th.—R. J. PAINE, *Hon. Sec.*

THE NORTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—The E.M.G. gramophone was demonstrated at our December meeting by its proprietor, Mr. E. M. Ginn. The instrument has already attained a well-deserved publicity, and upon this occasion our members had the opportunity to endorse all the good things that have been said about it. This they did, in no uncertain manner. For the reproductive and amplifying mechanism of the instrument Mr. Henry Seymour is said to be responsible, which clearly accounts for the fact, ably demonstrated by Mr. Ginn, that the full open tone and roundly resonant qualities manifested in its operation, place it among the very best achievements of modern sound production. Mr. L. Ivory occupied the chair, and also provided the programme, as far as the records were concerned; a circumstance which ensured satisfactory subject-matter for the demonstration. On this occasion Mr. Ivory aimed at a popular, as distinguished from a classical programme of records, and so successful was he in this particular, that during the evening, two gentlemen, who are well-known to be among the very oldest and most experienced of gramophone enthusiasts (one being practically the founder of this Society), seated on either side of your reporter, were busily engaged in marking down for personal acquisition, what amounted to about 50 per cent. of the items on the programme. This selection was compiled from the Columbia, Brunswick, Vocalion and H.M.V. catalogues. A further recommendation of the E.M.G. gramophone is that it plays Edison discs. Mr. Ginn was duly thanked for his most successful demonstration of an undeniably fine instrument, as was also Mr. Ivory for his happy selection of records. The meeting was well attended and three new members were elected.—WILLIAM J. ROBINS, *Hon. Recording Secretary.*

The regrettable enforced absence owing to illness of our regular scribe, Mr. W. J. Robins, is the cause of the following feeble report on his behalf, of our first meeting in the new year.

Maiden efforts by Messrs. G. W. Booth and A. Kuhl were the feature of the meeting. Although they must be classified as maiden efforts, the hand of the novice was particularly conspicuous by its absence. The Society's old stalwarts will have to look to their

laurels if our ever alert programme committee are going to find any more dark horses like our friends under notice. Mr. Kuhl used an Ultone and Mr. Booth favoured the H.M.V. Exhibition box. Fibre needles (H.M.V.) were the order of the day, proving that the fibre needle cult is a growing one. The Exhibition box is too well-known for its all-round excellence and brilliance to call for any special praise except perhaps that the one under notice was tuned to a nicety and left little to be desired. In the case, however, of the Ultone I must give special praise for its forward tone, unusual brilliance, and lack of tubbiness. The box in question was almost entirely free from the lowering of the pitch distortion which too often appears to be an inherent counterpart of the large diaphragm.

I feel no useful purpose will be served by a complete recapitulation of the whole of the excellent programme.

The following are a few of the recordings which particularly appealed to the writer and I think the meeting in general: *Ah! fors'è lui che l'anima* (*La Traviata*) (Verdi), Galli-Curci (H.M.V.); *Caro Nome* (*Rigoletto*) (Verdi), Galli-Curci (H.M.V.); *Le Crucifié* (Fauré), Gluck and Homer (H.M.V.); *Andante Cantabile* (Haydn), Lener Quartette (Columbia); *Connais-tu le pays?* (*Mignon*) (Thomas), Farrar and Kreisler (H.M.V.); *Ave Maria* (Gounod), McCormack and Kreisler (H.M.V.); *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* (Mendelssohn), Julia Culp (Scala); *Dite alla giovine* (*La Traviata*) (Verdi), Galli-Curci and De Luca (H.M.V.).

Votes of thanks to Mr. Booth and to Mr. Kuhl were proposed by our worthy Hon. Chairman, Mr. L. Ivory, and carried with unanimous enthusiasm.—"LOCUM TENENS."

THE SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—A retrospect of the past years is interesting in many ways, not the least of which is the fact that the Society has been able to provide a triple programme at all the regular monthly meetings, and thus, while easing the burden of each member, to afford some insight into very varied and interesting collections. There are few members of any society able to carry a whole evening's entertainment on their shoulders, and among a large membership it is often gratifying to the individual to be called upon to vie with one or two of his fellows in contributing to the entertainment and enjoyment of an often critical assembly.

A further cause for gratification is the instituting of special concerts devoted to the works of selected composers (as far as recorded) which has resulted in many cases of practically unknown or forgotten gems being brought to light and made accessible in their proper surroundings. A survey of this nature has shown a very sparse attention to Mendelssohn and Schumann, and, until very recently Mozart, in his more important instrumental works. It is hoped in the present year to continue these special concerts and also add from time to time technical talks, which, in the hands of a qualified expert can be made very enlightening.

As a wind-up of the year's activities, the last concert of 1924 took place on Dec. 27th, perhaps, somewhat unfortunately placed in the midst of the festive season, but with quite heroic fortitude, a respectable number tore themselves from the groaning board to recuperate their jaded nerves at the feet of St. Cecilia.

Here, freed from the clamour and importunities of infants they snatched a few hours of enjoyment, ministered thereto by two willing priests in the persons of Mr. J. A. Veal and Mr. G. W. Webb, and a no less valiant priestess in the person of Mrs. Desmonde.

To Mr. Veal his initial appearance before the members of the Society as a demonstrator may perhaps have been awe-inspiring, but he was, nevertheless, (or should have been) fortified by the excellence of his wares, illumined as they were by two of Frieda Hempel's latest records, Schubert's *Hoch, hoch die tierch* and Mendelssohn's *Auf Flügen des Gesanges*, better-known, perhaps, as *On wings of song*. May the supply of like work continue! Mrs. Desmonde was content to give a nice quiet programme with one old friend, *Eri tu che macchiavi*, sung this time by Titta Ruffo; a seldom heard record, the *Magiche Note* from Goldmark's *Regina de Saba*, which at one time was Caruso's foremost item. There was also a movement played by the English String Quartette from Glazounov's Op. 15, No. 5 (*All'ungherese*) which shows what can be done on the Dark Blue Labels in this medium.

No celebrities for Mr. Webb! Here was fare for the poor and needy (the date of the meeting is again referred to), and the orchestral items by the Court Symphony Orchestra were

unhackneyed and well played, consisting of the *Air for the G String*; the *Chant sans paroles* and two little-known trifles, but very interesting ones, (a) *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*, by Rimsky-Korsakoff, and (b) Liadov's *Musical Box*; and our old friend *Parted*, sung by Hubert Eisdell, but not at the end of the programme!—S. F. D. HOWARTH, *Reporting Secretary*.

SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.—

It is our pleasure to record an enthusiastic meeting held at our new hall at Clock Tower Chambers, 73, High Street, Lewisham, for our first night in 1925, on Monday, Jan. 12th.

The subject, "Russian Music," was taken by our member, Mr. Martin Kingslake (organist of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard, E.C.) and dealt with in a masterly manner. Opening with a brief preface as to the "universal" language of music our lecturer, by easy stages, took us through a century of music as given to the world by Russia. Proceeding he instanced the lack of knowledge in England until recent times of his subject, although this had now to some extent been remedied largely through the medium of the gramophone.

His subject proper dealt in the first instance with the wonderful effect the abortive Napoleonic invasion had on the musical talent of Russia, hitherto dependent for its music largely on Italian and German sources and commencing with the story of the great father of Russian music, Glinka, told us of the battle the big five (Balakiref, Cui, Borodin, Moussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakoff) had to get real appreciation of the new ideas into the hearts of the Russian people themselves. Despite ridicule and contempt these great ones pressed on until the national style was recognised and established. Proceeding further, our lecturer passed on to the influence of that other small band of modern musicians, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Stravinsky, and others who are to-day influencing the musical world so profoundly.

Finally we were told of what the so-called "Conservatives," Arensky, Tchaikovsky, etc., had given the world, their outlook and influence, closing with a brief survey of the life and work of that great modern operatic star Chaliapin, and telling us of his early poverty and struggle until he reached the pinnacle of his profession, and what is most wonderful of all, on scarcely any early musical training whatever.

Naturally all this was illustrated from time to time by aid of the gramophone. Glinka, Borodin, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Tchaikovsky, Glazounof, and Stravinsky all being represented and as the various records were played so we were told, in outline, the story of the opera, or ballet, or song as the case may be. Those brilliant works *Ruslan und Ludmila Overture* and the *Dance of the Tumblers* from the *Snow Maiden*, the *Nutcracker Suite* and *Ballet Music* from *Prince Igor*, represented the chief orchestral items; Chaliapin giving us *The song of the flea* and *In the town of Kazan* (Boris Godounov). Another vocal item of merit was Smirnov's rendering of the now well-known *Chanson Hindu* from *Sadko*. A delightful evening well spent was the verdict of all present.

Our February meeting to be held on the 9th will be in the hands of our President, Mr. Lewis, and the subject "Excerpts from Italian Opera." Intending visitors would oblige if they will communicate with our Secretary (stamp please) at 128, Erlanger Road, New Cross, S.E. 14.—ED. C. COXALL.

BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The annual general Meeting held at headquarters (New Morris Hall, Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.), Tuesday, Jan. 6th, was formally opened by our President, Mr. A. H. Mackenzie, who proceeded to read the yearly report. This proved to be highly satisfactory, not only had the Society surmounted several difficulties, but had enrolled a number of new members, which is a happy augury for the future. The "Financial Statement" was presented by Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, Mr. J. T. Fisher. The cash balance being just over £5, thus showing a substantial improvement over the preceding year.

Dr. Walmsley kindly consented to occupy the chair for the election of officers, the result of this being the return of the previous executive with a different allocation of offices in some cases: President, Mr. A. H. Mackenzie; Vice-President, Dr. Walmsley; Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, Mr. J. T. Fisher; Musical Director, Mr. Borders; and the undersigned, Hon. Recording Secretary, all of whom, together with Mr. G. W. Webb, form the committee.

At the previous meeting it had been decided to hold a competition, members to bring their own records, and sound-boxes, and to judge each on its merits, purely as a reproduction. This proved to be an interesting innovation. Of eleven entries the winning records were: *Le Cygne* (Saint-Saëns), violin, E. Zimbalist (H.M.V.), and *Kammenoi*

Ostrow (Rubinstein), piano, Harold Bauer (Victor), scoring 272 and 240 respectively, out of a possible 340, the first owned by a lady member, Mrs. Gedde, while Mr. Garnett secured second place.

The prizes were a record album presented by Mr. Lewis, and a record value 6s. 6d. (competitor's own choice).

The next meeting, Feb. 3rd., will provide a demonstration by the Orchorsol Gramophone Company; this will be the first before a London Society, and an interesting audition is expected. Full particulars can be obtained from Mr. J. T. Fisher, of 28A, Field-house Road, Balham, S.W.—S. N. COLLINS, *Recording Secretary*.

RICHMOND AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—

The meeting held on Monday, Dec. 15th. attracted a large audience, the programme being supplied by Messrs. W. F. Mason, A. R. Fittall, and the Parlophone Company, Ltd. The Company generously presented the Society with a further gift of nine records which will be duly utilised when the library commences to function. *Tannhäuser Overture* (R. Wagner) played by the Opera House Orchestra under the baton of Edward Moerike, consisting of two double-sided records was a masterly performance. In Mendelssohn's *Concerto in E minor* (six parts), arranged for violin and orchestra Eddy Brown and Opera House Orchestra gave an expressive rendering with fine tone and balance. From *La Bohème* Zita Fumagalli rendered *Donde lieta uscì* in pleasing style and her duet with Antonio Cortis, *O soave fanciulla* was, to say the least, full of beauty and tenderness. *Tristan and Isolde* (R. Wagner), played by the Opera House Orchestra, and *Morgenblätter*, composed by Johann Strauss and played by Marek Weber and his orchestra, were particularly good.

Among the records selected by Mr. W. F. Mason were *Serenade*, Opus 48 (Tschaikowsky), Jascha Heifetz; *The clock is playing* (Blaauw), a dainty intermezzo by De Groot and the Piccadilly Orchestra; *Lo, here the gentle lark* (Bishop), sung by the coloratura soprano, Mme. Amelita Galli-Curci. Mr. A. R. Fittall provided *Manon* (Massenet), Queens' Hall Light Orchestra; *Angels guard thee* (Goddard), W. H. Squire; *Serenade* (Drigo), Mischa Elman; *Depuis le jour* (Charpentier), Mme. Alma Gluck; and the *Nocturne* movement from Grieg's *Lyriscche Suite*, played by the Wireless Orchestra. Space precludes a detailed criticism of the latter programme, but it is to be noted that Messrs. Fittall and Mason were accorded a hearty vote of thanks.—T. SYDNEY ALLEN, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—

Since its origin the Liverpool Society has never been without its quota of members distinguished for their experimental zeal and inventive aptitude. It is always a matter of interest and pleasure to attend a demonstration of a novel or noteworthy achievement, especially when the demonstration is undertaken by the inventor in person. On Wednesday, Dec. 3rd, Mr. James Thomson, of Waterloo, introduced to his fellow-members of the Liverpool Society his "Violophone" instrument and "Ad Vivum" sound-box, which most of the audience then heard for the first time. Mr. Thomson presented three instruments, a Cabinet Grand, a Table Grand, and a Portable, and it may safely be said that whilst all had their merits the degree of their excellence was in inverse ratio to their size. The compact little "Attachaphone" was sweet in tone, quite surprising in volume, whilst for clarity and definition it was superior to what one usually looks for from this class of instrument. The unique feature of Mr. Thomson's productions is the tapered rectangular combined tone arm and short internal floating horn, forming one unit, built of wood throughout and pivoted in a way to give delicate and accurate balance. The sound-box, which is of the "mellow" diaphragm type is specially adapted to suit the peculiarities of the tone-arm and amplifying arrangements. The elimination of all metal fittings—as far as it is possible to dispense with them—is another marked feature of the "Violophone."

The second Annual Social and Dance was held on Wednesday, Dec. 17th, when a full muster of members and friends assembled at Roberts' Café, Bold Street, and spent a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Dancing, games, competitions, and music all had a place in the programme and everything went with a right good swing from start to finish. The millinery competition for the gentlemen was again the event of the evening and the hilarity was prolonged and uncontrollable. Dramatic recitations by Miss Meather, humorous interludes by Mr. Pim, and the very pleasing and acceptable singing of Mrs. Buzzard were all greatly appreciated. Due praise and best thanks must be accorded to Mr. Buzzard and

Mr. Folkes whose excellent arrangements and indefatigable efforts served to make the function so pronounced a success.

Will members and friends please note that future meetings will be held at the Rushworth Hall, Islington, and will take place on the second and fourth Mondays in each month, not first and third Wednesdays, as hitherto.—J. W. HARWOOD, *Recording Secretary*.

PRESTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—Our meeting on Dec. 16th will rank (by common consent) as one of the best we have had this session. Mr. H. L. Rink, of the Gramophone Co., Ltd., paid us a long-promised visit. Through the courtesy of S. Staveley and Sons Mr. Rink was provided with a dozen gramophones and a beautiful piano. The programme was a highly interesting and varied one. Mr. Rink, who is a well-known musical lecturer connected with the gramophone, gave us a most interesting demonstration of synchronisation, using about half a dozen gramophones. Playing the *Hungarian Fantasia*, the first part on one machine and the second on another, without (as it seemed to the writer) missing a single beat, was very cleverly done by Mr. Rink. I suspect Mr. Rink in doing this had one eye to business, to make every one of us the owner of two gramophones and two sets of records! To listen to a beautiful masterpiece, say Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in E flat* or one of his symphonies, without the necessity of turning records would indeed be a blessing. Amongst other interesting items we had a lovely song sung by McCormack; while this was going on, nightingales' singing came from two separate gramophones, as an accompaniment, a very beautiful effect which enraptured the audience.

Mr. Rink has the happy knack of knowing when to tell a story—and carries with him an excellent assortment of them! To borrow from the Chairman's, Mr. Livesay's, remarks, it is a pity the Gramophone Co., Ltd., has missed the opportunity of recording some of Mr. Rink's stories. They would be in great demand.

After a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Rink and some brilliant remarks of our Chairman, the meeting came to an enthusiastic conclusion. All interested in gramophones in this district should apply for membership to the Hon. Secretary, K. Albert, 11, Winkley Square.

THE GLASGOW AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.

—On Nov. 26th we had a most interesting demonstration of "doped" fibre needles. Our President, Mr. James Hamilton and Mr. A. A. Brown, of the Executive, both of whom are "doped" needle fiends combined to provide the demonstration which was an unqualified success. Both of these gentlemen have given much time and labour to the task of perfecting the fibre needles and the demonstration was the result of many experiments with various compositions, including shellac, special glue, and a mixture used for hardening gas mantles.

The demonstration was preceded by a short lecture on the subject by Mr. Hamilton in the course of which he gave many useful hints to members regarding the best methods for doping needles.

The gramophone is a wonderful invention and gramophonists are wonderful people, as witness the wealth of opinions one hears at gramophone meetings and reads in the gramophone press, yet the problem of ideal sound reproduction is still unsolved. Experiments with motors, horns, sound-boxes, tone-arms, needles, and diaphragms are being made continuously and doubtless some day we shall achieve the ideal when, if ever, we reach that goal, some credit will be due to the plodding amateur with the "bee in his bonnet."

On this occasion and through the courtesy and enterprise of the Orchorsol Gramophone Co., Ltd., of London, and Messrs. Paterson, Sons and Co., Ltd., Glasgow, we were also privileged in having a demonstration of the Orchorsol gramophone.

The first part of the evening was devoted to a demonstration of their 612 thirty-five guinea model. For this purpose Messrs. Paterson provided a supply of records comprising amongst others the following: *Drink to me only*, Flonzaley Quartet, H.M.V.; *Madamina* (*Don Giovanni*), Chaliapine, H.M.V.; *Prologue* (Pagliacci), Stracciari, Columbia; *Del Tempio al Limite*, Gigli and Pacini, H.M.V.; *Faust Selection*, De Groot and Orchestra, H.M.V.; *On Wings of Song*, Frieda Hempel, H.M.V. The success of the instrument in reproducing these records was instantaneous and was reflected in the rapt attention of the members throughout the performance and the spontaneous reception accorded each of the numbers.

A feature of the reproducing on this instrument is the purity and forwardness of the tone; there is no funnelled tone and no objectionable mechanical noises. This instrument appears to dissect the music, this was particularly noticeable in the instru-

mental quartet and the vocal duet, and the finest pianissimo is distinctly heard at any angle. The *Prologue* by Stracciari had the effect of hearing the singer in a concert hall. There is no evidence of distortion and no apparent sacrifice of tone or volume; if any such there are, they can only be detected by the most accomplished and skilled musician. This machine gave equally good results with the fibre needles and altogether the demonstration was pronounced a huge success.

Dec. 8th was the New Edison night, Messrs. Murdoch, McKillop and Co., Ltd., providing the instrument and programme.

An interesting and varied programme was provided, amongst an excellent selection the best were *Elf Fairy*, Frieda Hempel; *Rigoletto Selection*, American Symphony Orchestra; *By the Waters of Minnetonka* and *Lullaby*, Frieda Hempel; and *The Elephant and Fly* (bassoon and piccolo).

New Edison nights are favourite nights with our members, an expression of the high esteem in which the instrument is held.

Dec. 24th was devoted to a demonstration of the Beltona-Peridulce, Messrs. Murdoch, McKillop and Co. again obliging.

This proved another interesting and instructive venture and now we are debating amongst ourselves the merits of the various instruments and some interesting discussions are being held. We have some "musical live wires" amongst our members here in Glasgow and if some night we can arrange a full dress debate on sound reproduction we are sure to get some valuable information. I wonder if we could arrange such a meeting to synchronise with a visit from Mr. Mackenzie; this would be doubly interesting. Which reminds me that we almost realised such a pleasure in the middle of December, only the sudden illness of Mr. Mackenzie at the last moment depriving us of an anticipated treat. We hope it is only a deferred pleasure; he is sure of a cordial welcome when he cares to come north.

Greenock readers should note that there is a movement afoot to inaugurate a Gramophone Society in that town. A meeting has been held and I believe the nucleus of a society formed. Another meeting will be called at an early date and I hope all gramophonists and others interested will go to the meeting when advertised.

Intending members should write to Mr. J. Page, 30 South Street, Greenock, who is acting secretary.

GRIMSBY AND CLEETHORPES GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.

—[Mr. R. L. Rink gave a lecture-demonstration on Dec. 19th, which was, as usual, a great success.—Ed.]

The first meeting in the New Year was held on Friday, Jan. 9th, Mr. S. Holmes, a member, kindly providing a Grafonola Table Grand Model, together with a varied selection of records. Among them the following were worthy of being specially mentioned: *1812 Overture*, Grenadier Guards, Columbia; *Monty's Meanderings*, Columbia; *Andante Cantabile* (Dvorák); *I am a roamer*, Robert Radford, H.M.V.; *Organ Solo* (Rubenstein *Melody in F*), Columbia; *Dreams of long ago*, Caruso, H.M.V.; *Norwegian Cradle Song Trio*, Aco.; *Mountains of Mourne* and *Mary's Reply*, Edgar Coyle, Columbia; *Humoreske*, Elman, violin, H.M.V.; *God shall wipe away all tears*, Dame Clara Butt, Columbia.

At the interval the interim balance sheet was discussed and the position of the Society which had much improved since last year, session 1923-24.

A suggestion was made and agreed that the Society should open a voluntary contribution fund for the purpose of buying a machine for the Society's own use. Considering the rather small attendance, the first collection resulted in a very generous response, the amount collected being 27s. 6d., which was handed over to the Treasurer.

The Chairman, Mr. Larder, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. S. Holmes for his concert, which was cordially responded to by the members. This concluded an enjoyable and successful evening.—S. CROFT, *Hon. Secretary*.

BLOCKPOOL GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.

—We had a very successful meeting at our headquarters on Thursday, Dec. 4th, at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Greenwood gave the whole programme, which consisted of selected items from *The Messiah* during the first half, and a first-class miscellaneous programme after the interval.

The audience numbered about 150 and loudly applauded the items, even demanding an encore after hearing Galli-Curci's *Lo, here the gentle lark*. Mr. Greenwood complied by giving the reverse side of this excellent record, *The Echo Song*, which was also highly appreciated. One is apt to wonder though, which was most appreciated—the song, the singer, or the singer's name.

The outstanding features of the first half were: *Comfort ye* and *Every Valley* (Sydney Coltham), *O thou that tellest*, Edna Thornton, and *He shall feed His flock*. Norman Allin was altogether too

ponderous in his rendering of *Why do the nations*, though his rendering of *The trumpet shall sound* was an undoubted improvement. Norman Allin reminds me of the little boy: "When he's good, he's very, very, good; but when he's bad..." The choirs were very poor, although in extenuation I might say that I have yet to hear a good rendering of a chorus on the gramophone, and these were no worse than the rest.

The outstanding items of the second half were: *Mon cœur s'ouvre*, by Julia Culp; *Song of the Volga Boatmen*, by Chaliapine; the beautiful rendering of *On Wings of Song*, by Heifetz; and *Open the Gates*, by the late Evan Williams. Also, of course, the Galli-Curci mentioned previously.

[Wednesday, Dec. 17th, was devoted to a lecture-demonstration by Mr. R. L. Rink, of the Gramophone Company, who figures so largely in these reports that he may be omitted on this occasion. —ED.]

At our last meeting on Jan. 8th we had a demonstration of Parlophone records, kindly lent for the occasion by the Parlophone Company. There is no doubt that if this company keeps up the quality of its present output, one or two of the other companies will have to look to their laurels. The bands and orchestras are extremely well recorded and the numbers where a chorus is employed are far ahead of anything which I personally have heard. One in particular struck me as being remarkably good—*The Bridal Chorus* from *Lohengrin*. The chorus in this record is beautifully restrained, yet full of harmony and it is extremely well balanced, no part being too pronounced. Other splendid records are: the *Tannhäuser Overture* in full on two double sided 12in. records; the *Lohengrin Prelude*, also complete; *Merry Wives of Windsor Overture*; *Moto Perpetuo*, played by that fine violinist Joan Manen; *Yeomen of England*, by Jamieson Dodds; the *Credo* from *Othello*, sung by George Baker, a wonderful record this for power and forward tone; and the wonderful *Senta's Ballad* from *The Flying Dutchman*. Space forbids mentioning the others, but there was ample proof that the members thoroughly enjoyed the programme, *Senta's Ballad* being, I think, the favourite.—V. P. BORRAND THOMAS, *Recording Secretary*.

SHEFFIELD GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.

—At our meeting on Nov. 18th, those members who had not already been privileged to hear the new H.M.V. instrument had the opportunity to do so and decide whether they preferred it to the usual sound-box type of machine. The pleated diaphragm idea is certainly very novel and the Gramophone Company are to be congratulated on producing such a beautifully finished instrument. The model at our disposal was the smaller of the two now on the market and it was put through its paces on all classes of records. We found that it was particularly kind to string instruments, but on certain vocal items the tone was not as stable and solid as one could wish. However, in the writer's opinion, it is undoubtedly calculated to do more justice to fibre needle reproduction than is the orthodox sound-box gramophone. A vote of thanks was proposed to the Gramophone Gallery for the trouble they had gone to in loaning the machine to us, and the monthly competition was decided in favour of an orchestral selection from *Carmen*—Mrs. Holmes' record.

Mr. F. W. Thompson is disrespectfully termed "the fibre needle fiend," and judging by his interesting demonstration on Dec. 2nd, he seems to have exhausted most of the possibilities of the wooden reproducing point. He occupied the platform for about a couple of hours and gave us an instructive as well as a musical, treat. As on previous occasions he was good enough to provide his own machine (a horn model) and with the numerous "gadgets" he has added to it he gets the best out of fibres, which, by the way, he "dopes," and here let it be chronicled that our Secretary deserves severe censure for his undignified references thereto. Mr. Thompson's programme was sufficient to create some envy in the majority of us and we thoroughly enjoyed the items submitted. They embraced records by Clara Butt, Stralio, Galli-Curci, Norman Allin, Martinelli, Cortot, Caruso, etc., etc., and it was brought home very forcibly to us that only by means of the gramophone could such a galaxy of first-class international artists be heard in one evening. At the conclusion of the meeting a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Thompson was proposed, seconded, and duly carried unanimously.—THOS. H. BROOKS, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

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